The Epic Tale of the Forsaken Hero Volume 2

Chapter 2: Dungeon-Labyrinth of the Dreamless Sleep

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Sincerely

Two goddesses exist in this world. However, they belong to opposite sides.

Goddess [Claria]. The great goddess who the human race worships. Her appearance is beautiful and it is said she overflows with affection from centuries of sophistication.

Claria's opposite goddess.

Her name is [Messiah]. The incarnation of evil who rules demons. Carrying out all kinds of brutalities, she would invade and occupy towns. The residents would be struck down and killed to a man.

These two conflicting gods would continue to fight, involving the world.

To defend people, [Claria]. To obtain the world, [Messiah].

Although their abilities rivaled each other's, the tactical balance was skewed by a certain existence.

The hero Terias.

With the strong power gained after receiving the divine protection from [Claria], he went on to defeat demons sent by [Messiah] one after another.

And, finally, the hero and [Claria] managed to seal [Messiah].

Rostalsia has once again regained its peace—.

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"——Fuu……" (Daichi)

I shut the book I was reading just now. I roughly learnt the knowledge of this country and world in this history book.

I was currently on the fourth floor of the royal library. A corner of the corner of history. There was still something I wanted to do before heading to the next dungeon, so I was still in Rostalgia.

The room accommodated three people. Leadred brought a jewel that we sold for money.

After all, a dungeon guardian's finances are different.

I got the money for the royal library's required admission from Leadred.

A slave's things are its master's things. I don't have…. to worry… I'm not… worrying…

While reading and struggling with my pride as a man, someone came in and spoke from behind me.

"Daichi-sama, the preparations are complete." (Shuri)

The girl's name is Hamakaze Shuri. My memorable number one slave.

Apparently, she seems to have finished the mission I imposed on her.

"Is that so?" (Daichi)

I piled my books up sideways like a mountain and took her hand.

"Okay, guide me at once." (Daichi)

"… Certainly, allow me to guide you." (Shuri)

Hamakaze drews her body close.

… Because the feeling was pleasant, I didn't say anything… though it is needless to say that looking away was painful.

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I had promised Hamakaze a reward.

She isn't in the usual adventurer clothes, as she and Leadred have been wearing matching maid outfits recently.

Why maid clothes? When Hamakaze asked, I answered with knowledge of this kind particular to boys.

“… Still, you have strange tastes. For you to want to be with someone like me…” (Daichi)

The wish Hamakaze asked for was『be together for one day』. In other words, she wanted to stay with me.

“Daichi-sama is mean.” (Shuri)

“… What?” (Daichi)

“You should know my feelings.” (Shuri)

“… I don’t know them.” (Daichi)

Recently Hamakaze has taken a rather aggressive attitude when it comes to that. Also why is it I need to know your feelings, understand mine.

I have a body that can be discarded at any time.

It’s this thought that is exacerbated by her right now. I’ve been down this road before.

Play a clown so that I’m not disliked. Suffer through wearing many masks.

This physical contact with her is part of it. So it shouldn’t be strange that above all, the painful one is Hamakaze.

Nevertheless, I can’t free myself from the chains of this dilemma.

For me, it is because I am doing things like this.

“… Huh? What are you doing? Don’t hesitate because today we are going out.” (Shuri)

“… That’s right… Yeah” (Daichi)

I stopped talking. However, she just looked at me and kept talking.

“I actually only want to go to one place. Truthfully I wanted to go there from the beginning with Daichi-sama.” (Shuri)

“Then wouldn’t the reward『to go there』have been good?” (Daichi)

“No, because then my efforts would have been wasted.” (Shuri)

“…Hey, don’t be shameless.” (Daichi)

“Daichi-sama may have stopped caring about me.” (Shuri)

… Because it might have been like that, I wasn’t able to reply immediately.

“Well, it’s fine. So, where is it? Say it.” (Daichi)

“… You won’t refuse?” (Shuri)

“I won’t break my promise, come on and say it.” (Daichi)

“I see… I want to go to….” (Shuri)

She somehow put on a lonely smile and said where.

“—the royal palace.” (Shuri)

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After coming here, all I saw was doom and gloom. Here I suffered alone and was thrown out to be eaten.

The beginning of everything.

The royal palace of Rostalgia.

Hamakaze and I stood in front of the gate.

“Seeing this again, it still looks huge.” (Daichi)

Towering over its surroundings, it had been made to withstand considerable attacks.

There was no response. With no one around, the air was suffused in silence.

“…….” (Shuri)

She was just staring at one point.

I didn’t know where that point was, and thought that I didn’t need to know.

“…….” (Shuri)

She just stood there in absolute silence.

Like a puppet with no soul.

A trickle of tears ran down her cheek.

What was she thinking about? Normally, it wouldn’t be weird for her to be here. At the dungeon, I think she swore her loyalty to me from her fear of『Dying』.

She may only have goodwill for me because she thought it was necessary for her to live and get her revenge.

So, when she said she wanted to come here I thought『Ah, it was like this after all』. I reacted cooly.

“—…” (Daichi)

My chest hurt.

Though only a short while had passed, it felt very long. She slowly turned to me.

“…….Daichi-sama.” (Shuri)

“……What is it?” (Daichi)

“….. I, I think you need to come here.” (Shuri)

“….. Why?” (Daichi)

『Because we were seen.』

Anyway, I was just thinking this kind of thing.

However, such an expectation was betrayed.

“—-Because I understood that my feelings were real.” (Shuri)

Hamakaze was smiling.

She ran to and hugged me, causing me to stand there surprised.

My frozen thoughts began to finally move again.

“… Hamakaze?” (Daichi)

“I saw Samejima from the gate.” (Daichi)

“….. So you are saying your feelings for him are real and the ones for me are not?” (Daichi)

When I said that, Hamakaze’s guesses by my jittery eyes.

“You’re kidding… right? … Perhaps, are you disowning me?” (Shuri)

Though it changed into a smile that was like teasing immediately.

“No… It’s just, well… I don’t want to cause a huge misunderstanding by saying something suggestive like『Hmm? Are you perhaps interested in me?』like I have done in the past.” (Daichi)

After becoming very sad, it was surely my misunderstanding. The sympathy sent through that glance was surely my misunderstanding.

“Anyway, if you don’t like me who on Earth would?” (Daichi)

“… With all due respect, that is rude, Daichi-sama.” (Shuri)

“That’s… well, you know?” (Daichi)

“Yes. However, I like that sort of Katsuragi.” (Shuri)

“————-” (Daichi)

A surprise confession.

Moreover, my mind stopped functioning.

“I know that it is selfish to say. However, please hear me.” (Shuri)

Her small eyes caught mine.

“Somehow, even when Katsuragi complains you do so kindly, even if speaking ill of something.” (Shuri)

“That is in your imagination. You should take that back while there is

still time.” (Daichi)

“I will become stronger so that I won’t die in order to help the Katsuragi that I like.” (Shuri)

“I only wanted a strong piece. Hamakaze was thinking things like that?” (Daichi)

“Choosing to play a bad role purpose, Katsuragi gave me a reason to live.” (Shuri)

“It’s not like that… I…” (Daichi)

My mouth was held closed by her finger.

“No matter what you think Katsuragi, it is unrelated. Because my feelings won’t change.” (Shuri)

She brought her face close.

…. This beautiful face I’ve seen many times.

With cheeks that looked like they were dyed like red plums and round eyes that were moistened with tears. Soft pink lips and smooth flowing black hair.

A resounding hot gaze. Close enough that I could hear her breath. Our noses touched.

Then our lips.

“I love you, Katsuragi.” (Shuri)

She kissed me a second time, it was sweet.

Fate

“….. Hamakaze, you…”

….. I wonder if I should believe her….? No, it is different. One by one, it isn’t good to think about these kinds of things.

It what way would it be good to suspect the person that is giving you goodwill.

“….. Would you accept me?”

She asks again.

It is good that I don’t hear it as rustic.

It is being requested by her. I am asked this for the first time by someone.

——It’s not unpleasant, it is different. I don’t want a reason. Don’t try to make up an excuse. I understand.

To me, this girl…. She is an important person.

“Shuri.”

I pat her head, moving my hand along her hair, ending on her shoulders.

I can feel her trembling under the tips of my fingers. It is strained. Though, it might be that I am trembling.

“……”

Hamakaze shut her eyes. I understand what she expects.

She is waiting.

Waiting for my approach.

“…….. Shuri.”

“……. Nn.”

This time, I will kiss her. I bring my face close——.

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We left from the royal palace, visiting a large commercial district of the kingdom.

Everyone is full of life and the vigor is definitely overflowing. There are many guests in the shops, and it seems to prosper considerably.

An armor shop in particular is especially showing the upsurge.

Rumors spread about the heroes whom the country summoned returning from floor 51 of [Rigal’s Den] covered in wounds.

The existence of the monster house trap room seems to have spread, too; skilled adventurer’s preparing a group for [Rigal’s Den] start to get ready for entering.

Their motive is clear. In order to server the country, use the heroes as a strategy guide for the dungeon.

Well, the dungeon guardian there is already my slave.

I go to Shuri while desperately holding in my laughter. [TN: Bit of a stretch for this one.]

“As one would expect, there are indeed many commodities.”

With star like eyes that are sparkling, Shuri’s eyes glance from here to there.

After all, girls really do like shopping don’t they?

“Daichi-sama! Let’s go around slowly after this!

“Ah, I got it, I got it. We have money, too. I’ll buy you something.”

“Hai!”

There are a lot of men. In other words, I who walked with a maid gathered cursing looks from others.

“Oi, you there. You brought a good woman, huh? Isn’t life shor—?!”

I bought everything. With such plain provocation, I took everything that seemed to be worth it. When they sold out, Hamakaze gave off a very pleased face.

The benevolence! I wanted to shout, but didn’t. This has happened before.

To think that just as I reach my hand out to my splendid woman it ends.

“Daichi-sama, we’ve arrived.”

“Oh, the adventurer guild…..!”

Hamakaze and I had come to the adventurer’s guild. This was our original purpose. It took two days to get here.

The next dungeon was decided.

“….. Oh.”

A voice of admiration is raise. When passing through the doors, a spectacle was seen.

Inside was a wide room with depth that looked like tavern.

There was a counter made from a tree that separates forward into seven segments with windows in separating them all.

Newcomers register sequentially from the right, search desk, getting a two quest receipts each.

However, that is all. I head straight for the seventh counter『Information Sales』.

“Hello. Can I help you? Would you be looking to buy information today?”

The receptionist quickly fastened her gaze to my eyes. A good professional skill.

Her ears are longer than a human’s with a light blue color a human is

incapable of.

Perchance, she might be an elf. Such species truly seem to exist.

“…… Guest-sama?”

The receptionist who watches me who isn’t talking at all sends me a dubious glance.

I immediately respond with the following words.

“My bad, I was impolite. It is because you are very beautiful.”

“Haa……”

“……”

My soul felt like it was shaved off by a cold and penetrating gaze.

Since there is no reason to decrease my favorability, I decided to tell her what I wanted to buy.

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Currently, up to floor 27 is completed. The rate is unfavorable.

It is because the dungeon’s labyrinth is complex and it hard to find the room with stairs.

Furthermore, the walls, they drive your sense of direction mad by appearing as mirror-like crystal.

Named for these reasons, the [Labyrinth of the Sleeping Trance].

This is the next dungeon that we have decided to aim for.

After obtaining the map of the labyrinth, we spent some time around the commercial district as I promised earlier.

Dry-goods store, bookstore, grocer, restaurant, retail store, and finally a slave shop.

“Daichi-sama! How about this?”

Shuri was wearing an orange dress by the fitting room.

My first impression of her was innocence. It was easy for me to think that these bright colors suited her.

Though generally it isn't, the height of the skirt being low became a merit. By choosing clothes like the one piece it appealed to purity.

It is a single color, but has somewhat of a gradient towards the bottom; the balance isn't bad.

She twirls on the spot and the skirt dances. I glance at her thin white legs that appear.

Dangerous. This is very dangerous.

I glance up quickly to see her collarbone, to her shoulder line. I begin to have an unbecoming swelling due to her face. Her nape is charmingly glossy from a little sweat.

To be frank, it is lovely.

"…… Daichi-sama?"

"…… It's nothing."

"However, you sat down suddenly….. do you hurt somewhere?"

"N-no. It's just that I don't feel like standing."

Please don't ask why.

"R-really?"

Fortunately, Shuri seems to not understand why.

"Then, buy it with peace of mind. It suits you amazingly. It is worth the cost."

"Y-yes! I want this!"

Shuri ran to where the clerk was at the counter at full speed.

I managed to retain my pride as a man.

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“Ah! It was a good day.”

We who went window shopping, ate rice together, and enjoyed a complete date were heading home to hotel.

“It was good.”

Though I was taken around the city and was honestly exhausted, it seemed to not matter as long as I could hear impressions of the city from Shuri.

“Although, most was just talking with me, were you satisfied?”

After all, I was only going to buy one dress.

Other than talking while walking, we didn’t do much.

“Yeah. No complaints.”

“However, don’t feel reserved if you want something. You’ve earned it.”

“….. Hey, Daichi-sama. You don’t have to buy me things.”

Shuri had a slightly sulky expression and looked a little miffed.

“Though I don’t feel like that, I apologize if I made you feel bad.”

“That apology was good, so please remember.”

Shuri clasped my hand.

“Staying near the girl you like…. you can feel warmth, spending days casually together…. That such a blessing.”

“……”

The force from her hand gripped tighter. Her cheeks reddened, and not from the evening sun.

It might be embarrassing.

I’m too embarrassed.

My body temperature rises.

My heart beat is noisy.

I could look at her forever. [TN: Stretching it,❤]

“L-let’s go! Leadred is waiting for us!”

“R-right! Let’s go home to sleep! We need to be up early tomorrow!”

And so, like a gale we hurried to the hotel.

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It becomes night. We are lodging at『The Moon of Rostalsia』. Two days with morning and evening meals amount to 10,000 Col. We found this place from the adventurer guild’s quest board a little while ago. It is a considerably good hotel.

Subjugate 50 Rigals for 5,000 Col. It’s supposed to be pretty hard work.

Thanks to Leadred’s favor, we are able to stay here.

She is distinguished by her maid outfit.

“Welcome home, Hero-sama, Shuri as well.”

Her tone has returned to normal because I asked her to do so.

All the same, that does not mean I am great. It depends on the person.

Even so, for no special reason she was glad to have a friend. Rather, this is a sure bet.

She wouldn’t budge beyond『Hero-sama』, but began to understand my side.

“I’m home. Without delay, though it is bad to immediately begin, let’s talk about tomorrow’s dungeon.

“Hero-sama”

Leadred spoke to interrupt.

“Hmm? What is it?”

“Hai. There is actually some information you need.”

She unfolds a sheet of paper that was in her pocket and hands it to me.

Today, she said that she would gather information while concealing her appearance. Something might interfere with the dungeon capture.

This possibility is put into the corner of my mind, and I look over the sentences.

“…… Na.”

About halfway down I was speechless. My hand stopped moving.

It’s a lie….. hey, this…… really….

“Ku…. Hahahahaha!!”

It wasn’t possible to contain my laughter.

This is hilarious.

It is unbearably interesting.

What sort of revelation from god is this?

“…..Daichi-sama? What is it?”

Shuri looks at my hand from behind. I pass the document from Leadred to her.

“Look at this.”

She takes it and looks at the letter.

Then she immediately showed the same reaction.

Hamakaze and I reacted like this to such a thing.

It was the application guidelines for a guard.

However, it is not to guard a wealthy merchant, nor a king.

The object recorded there.

『Hero Guard Request

On the way to the [Labyrinth of the Sleeping Trance], looking for those to serve as guards.

Identification not required. Influential people wanted. 』

—-Ominous Hero {{Classmate}}.

Begin Preparations

“What’s our plan to enslave the heroes?”

“We’ll make the best use of Samejima without killing him. Confine them and kill their companions one after another. They will surely fall into distrust of one another and blame each other.”

“Though unpleasant, after it is killed once, let’s make it into my slave. That will push it to work hard eternally to avenge itself. If it’s a woman it will be fine to sell her to a brothel after we are done with her; it is more than she deserves. This way, she suffers and we kill two birds with one stone.”

““Desu!””

We look at the flyer, our schedule for the future is significantly rearranged.

『The Heroes’ fighting spirit has been lost. They are to get accustomed to the dungeon in order to regain confidence, there is no choice but to capture. Therefore, we are looking for a new guard to cooperate. 』

To summarize the story Leadred heard, it is mostly like this.

From the kingdom, in this case guard means『Shield』.

A throwaway in case of an unexpected situation.

The adventurers are also guessing the same thing, it seems that no one has volunteered so far.

In the first place, if you have confidence in your skill enough to guard the Heroes that purposely won’t fight you could just aim at the dungeon capture yourself.

Does Ginger understand what is going on around here? If such a request was put out, he must be a foolish king.

The talk is progressing in the direction of where the request was received. I think this request is foolish.

At any rate, we all hold a grudge towards heroes.

“All right, from here on our objective is settled and will be carried out. I am the only one that will take the request. You two must head for the labyrinth. Objections?”

“Huh?! Do I not take it as well?”

“Daichi-sama! What about me?”

“Oh. You aren’t even a human to start with, and they know Shuri’s face.”

“Ku-……. There must be some other way….”

“…. Yeah, I won’t be selfish…..”

The two withdrew.

Even if they don’t change my opinion, there are still important preparations.

The preparations are related to the strategy that I came up with the moment I heard the story. I curse them on a daily basis, and getting revenge on them someday occupies my mind.

This time I will make use of a plan.

Well, there are a lot of things that should be confirmed from Leadred before I can achieve it.

“Leadred, I want to ask you something. Will you answer?”

“Ah, of course. If I know it, ask anything.”

“Is that so? Then, first of all….”

I begin to talk about the revenge scenario I was making in my head. I had her confirm and give advice on a necessary matter in the process and begin to assemble the plan.

Until we make the plan『Perfect』, we think up and repeat the

process.

The final outcome is satisfying, so we went to bed and morning dawned.

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I woke up in the warm sunshine from the open curtains and stretched my body.

Apparently, Shuri seems to have opened them.

“Good morning, Daichi-sama.”

“Ah, good morning.”

I return the greetings while rubbing my eyes.

Though I only slept a short time, carelessness won’t be permitted in the dungeon at all. Furthermore, the dungeon will have an evil environment such as hard floors. [TN: Hard floors are the least of your worries]

Compared to that, here is a soft bed. There is no life threatening danger either. It wouldn’t be an exaggeration to say that this is heaven.

“You seem to have slept well.”

“Well. I think that I can sleep anywhere, except the dungeon for now.”

“Well, that’s so.”

She smiled as she agreed.

…… Isn’t she too splendid?

“……. Ah-”

I embraced her small body. Without resistance, she completely settled into my arm.

My face was buried in her neck. A woman’s faint, sweet aroma.

“….. settle down……”

“D-Daichi-sama…. Isn’t it bad to act like that today because there is important work…..?”

“I must replenish myself with the Shuri ingredient ahead of time. It gives me courage.”

“……. There is no other way.”

She seemed to have understood what I wanted to say. Because it is miserable, I did not want to say it…. She took my feelings into consideration. I truly appreciate it.

After that, I continued getting courage from Shuri for about ten minutes.

After breakfast, we separate at the entrance into two groups. Though it is lonely because we won’t meet each other for a while starting today, I pat their heads.

“Hero-sama. Let’s do our best to reunite and laugh with each other.”

“Daichi-sama. I wish you good luck.”

“Ah. Let’s both meet there. Do not overwork yourselves.”

“I understand.”

“Be relieved, I’ll protect us. Well then.”

Saying that, the two shoulder their luggage and leave the inn.

After seeing them off until they disappear from sight, I quickly move into action.

The response to the letter I sent to the royal palace yesterday arrived, I am to be examined this morning.

I think they want to try my abilities, so to speak.

I arrive as what seems to be just an adventurer who wields an iron long sword and leather armor. I stored a potion of a medical herb that can cure paralysis and poison in case of emergency.

And now, I are in front of that detestable person—-Ginger.

“Are you the adventurer named Yuji?”

Yuji is the false name I registered at the adventurer’s guild yesterday, it wasn’t questioned.

By the way, I registered just after shopping. I didn’t know it wasn’t possible to sell wares if you weren’t registered to a guild. Thanks to that, the pages in my dark past have increased once again.

Apart from that, as long as my name is heard, even a similar face seems to be acceptable.

From my standpoint, it is most likely because I am to be the『Shield』that will be stepped on.

Maybe then, I just might not be examined. Only fools would recruit like this. It’s impossible to do.

“Yes, that’s right. I want to help, so I applied.”

My abusive language is concealed, acting respectful my lowering my head.

“Umu. Then, show me your power. It is important to inspect your capability.”

“With pleasure….. What do you want me to do? Should I use magic?”

“Umu. That’s fine. I want to see your power.”

“Certainly. Then, let me show you my magic.”

Following the scenario that we prepared, I continuously used an Imperial-class magic followed by eight instances of the Spirit-class magic『Flame bulb』simultaneously.

According to Shuri’s common knowledge of this world and Samejima’s abilities, I set mine to be lower in order to avoid suspicion.

I will say that the results were enough to please that foolish king.

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I received the notification of acceptance and was guided by one of the country's martial soldiers. After hearing it, it seems that a sortie was immediately gathered. Moreover, it seems that this soldier was passed on to me to babysit me.

His unfortunate handling aside, it seems the kingdom wants to quickly regain the heroes' dignity.

I said nothing as it is convenient for me.

Walking down the quiet long corridor with the soldier, the contents of the mission are spoken about.

"Right now Daichi is in charge of four heroes. "

"Only four people?"

Thinking about it, that is considerably few. Of the 29, only four….?

"Yes. Many of the heroes felt fear from the demon from the last sortie…. Most have held on to the sickness in their mind."

"….. those guys are pathetic."

The demons ate me because of you guys.

It's no good. I'm excessively angry. I endure it and clench my fist.

"…… And so? These four aren't ill?"

"Yes. Ten of the heroes are fine. The others are divided into three groups in order to acquire the experience efficiently. As for the group Daichi is in charge of, the balance is composed well."

"Is that so? That's too bad."

"No, such a thing….. Ah, here. We've arrived."

"Understood. I'll go now ….. yeah. I'm off to finish my preparations."

Saying so, I drive away the soldier with my hand.

"Certainly. Then, excuse me."

He retraced his path after bowing, not seeming to care about my impoliteness.

…… was I exposed?

Slight uneasiness ran through my chest, though it went away.

"…… Well."

I stand in front of the door and confront it. If I open this, they are there.

They completely humiliated me and threw away Shuri.

….. This morning, Shuri gave me a part of her strength….. it's alright. I won't fail.

I stare at the doorknob.

Fuu. I exhale.

"…..I'm coming in."

The knob is turned and the door opened.

Coming into sight is a man with black hair and a glasses girl with blonde hair tied into pigtails.

Samejima didn't appear to be there.

However, that is fine.

He will be the one to receive the best suffering.

It is more interesting if the main event is saved for last.

Though, I'll play with these guys first.

Starting from here—-the curtain rises on our revenge tragedy song {{Opening}}.

Improvised Party

“You’re our guard this time, Yuji?”

The only male in the party talked to me.

He’s someone that I remember well.

He belongs to Samejima’s entourage.

He looks to have not changed at all. An average height and build, a natural Japanese man all in all. Rather, have you not gotten fatter?

Evidence that he didn’t bother with daily training. It seems that Umahara has been lazy.

“Umahara-kun, it’s rude to speak like that! I’m sorry, please overlook his behavior.”

As for the girl—Tamaki Yui—it seems that she misunderstood my lack of a response since I was in a bad mood.

She is the class chairman, a volunteered peacemaker. To put it bluntly, she assisted in bullying me and promoted it.

As I recall, it became fine to bully me because she was popular with the teachers and others in the school.

….. Wait. Didn’t I have human rights? ….. I don’t want to think about it. This feeling is building fast.

Regardless, there are people in front of me.

“It’s fine, I don’t mind. I am Yuji, an adventurer. For now, I give you my regards.”

I hold out my hand and say so to shake hands with them. One by one, the girls introduce themselves.

“H-Hayase Fuuko. P-pleased to meet you.”

“Minamoto Kureha.”

“Tamaki Yui, thank you very much!”

Even in class, Hayase was a complete shadow, so her name matches her appearance. She was an innocent bystander. She never acted violently towards me….. As you would expect, I do not wish to kill her.

She’ll be given a role to play. The pieces begin to fall together in my head.

The Yankee with imitation blonde hair confronts me. She is the leader of the group that follows Samejima. The amount of times I’ve suffered from her foot are beyond count. Therefore, I decided she’ll receive capital punishment.

“Ah, my best regards. Though it is fast, we are to form a sortie. Will you inform me of the party’s composition before we begin? I would like to understand.”

“Minamoto-san and I are the vanguard, with Umahara-kun and Hayase-san in the rear. I give the orders.”

I see, a typical composition. Before Umahara was in front of Hayase, she was on standby like me.

“Quite a good composition. I won’t have to think much on it.”

“Yes, thank you.”

“I can easily survive by defending. Then, let’s go to capture the dungeon.”

“Hai! Let’s descend!”

“Shall I show you my power?”

“Y-yes……”

“……. Tch.”

My former classmates leave the room in succession.

Ah, let's face it. That place will become your grave.

While snickering in my mind, I follow them out.

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Nothing happened on the way there. While everyone was talking on the way, I spent the time in tension. This isn't the same as [Rigal's Den].

Learn from experience, guys…. I was amazed at the situation, though at least it let me organize what I found out.

First of all, their special abilities.

Umahara's『Process Replication』allows him to spend his MP to temporarily make any magic his own and reproduce it.

Minamoto's『Variation Sword』allows her to change the hardness of her sword and its length, up to 8 meters.

Hayase's『Grand Library』is a non-combat ability. Once she learns something, she will remember it for eternity. Something that could be useful at any time.

Tamaki's『Witch of Freezing』increases the effect of her ice magic by one stage. However, it cannot exceed the God-class.

Although everyone had an imbalanced power, I was most frightened of Tamaki's ability. Spirit-class magic would become Soul-class magic and Soul-class would become King-class magic.

This was good to know in advance because although there is a big level difference we might take some damage in the worst case. Shuri can only use a few Soul-class spells.

Incidentally, since I was given『Steel Heart』, I wouldn't be scratched. Lying to Hayase about this would be a big risk for our trust.

I understand that having status values this high isn't good as it stands out.

Umahara Keito. It is obvious that he likes Tamaki. He hasn't separated from her since we left.

Unfortunately, she's been talking to me to avoid Umahara.

Honestly I don't think she is trying to get on good terms with me, rather she is doing so because she wants me to save her when she's in pinch.

"Um, Yuji-san?"

"What?"

"Why are you going to the [Labyrinth of the Sleeping Trance] with us? Wouldn't [Rigal's Den] have been better?"

…. This person, even though I already understand….

I pretend to not understand as we travel and listen to Tamaki.

I want to keep the conversation going. I really don't want to talk to Umahara.

….. Well, I know that he'll do nothing but brag if he gets the chance….

"Right now, it is hard to go to [Rigal's Den] because it is overflowing with adventurers. So, unlike before, the [Labyrinth of the Sleeping Trance] became more favorable to train at."

"Heeeh, so there was a reason like that….."

Blah…. Are we going to continue this exchange….?

Since I am getting bored I decide to stop this conversation forcibly.

"Then, we are now exploring the dungeon. Everyone, arm yourselves and tighten formation."

Tamaki and Hayase do as they are told and pull out short swords. It goes without saying, but the other two don't.

They show expressions that say they have no intention of following orders.

"…. Hey, aren't you our guard?"

"Yes, that is so."

“Then , don’t tell us what to do.”

“……Huh?”

…. These people. Are they so arrogant that they already forgot us dying? [TN: Talking about Hamakaze’s and his death.]

“We’d be fine even without your power. We were only defeated there because we were attacked by so many demons.”

“…… That arrogance will eventually cost you your life, you should stop it.”

“Aren’t you are here to defend us if we are in danger? At that time, give up your life and protect us.”

Sneering, Umahara brandished his staff and went inside.

“Since it’s like that, it’s alright.”

Minamoto follows Umahara inside.

“Aah, you two….”

“I’m sorry, Yuji-san. They are overconfident of their strength…” [TN: She refers to them as children]

We were being left behind.

Flustered, Hayase bows to apologize for Tamaki.

I clap the other two on the shoulder and let out a dry laugh.

“I don’t mind, so don’t worry. Let’s follow them. The monsters in there are stronger than the ones from [Rigal’s Den].”

“Y-yes!”

I acted nice to get them to let down their guard. It seems that they are starting to relax. The tension has been lessened a bit.

“There’s no need to use honorifics with me. I’m as old as you all.”

“Is that so? You seem older…..”

“I get that a lot. Don’t worry though, as your senpai in exploring dungeons I’ll defend you without fail. Follow me.”

I put on as good of a smile as I could. It was hard to smile so much in one day. I’m not used to smiling so much.

“Ah…. Yeah….”

“Please continue doing your escort well, Yuji.”

“Ah, of course.”

I invite the two girls inside as I lead them by the hands.

Guiding Two Heroes

A few hours after looking for and catching up to Umahara and Minamoto, we made it to the 20th floor.

I'd say that everything has gone well so far. We encounter a Wight White Lancer.

The Wight is the corpse of a demon that has bleached white bones. As its name suggests, it carries a spear.

Though it has a somewhat higher status, of all its attacks the main one that is troublesome is its『Poison』effect.

When it comes to the poison status effect, it is necessary to use an antidote to cure it.

Minamoto who was hit by it is currently being treated. Because she was fatigued and didn't evade its attack in time, she was struck by the spear during an attack.

"Hey, Minamoto-san. Please drink this."

Hayase passed Minamoto some『Yanu Leaf』, an antidote. She takes it and hurriedly drinks it.

Her complexion quickly improved. Apparently, the effects of the poison were neutralized.

However…..

"Amazing, Hayase."

"Right?"

Tamaki was the one to respond to the praise. Behind them, Umahara put on a dissatisfied expression.
Come on, this fellow….

"Hayase-san read a large amount of medical documents at the royal

palace, so she doesn't make mistakes with amounts in her treatments. Therefore, we can fight without worrying about status effects!"

Tamaki snapped her fingers and took a pose. In high spirits, aren't you? [TN: He is sort of belittling her mentally]

However, Hayase's value seems to continue increasing.

The medical knowledge in this world is quite lacking and still developing. Though there are physical and magical strength recovery potions, there are many potions for other conditions that haven't been perfected.

For example, the potency of that antidote–『Yanu Leaf』. It will have negative effects on your health if you take more than you need, such is the risk.

Therefore, you can only take as much as you need at the time.

"Is that so? Hayase's talent is quite indispensable for this party."

"T-thank you….."

After being praised by me, Hayase seemed to shine. Her behavior, I'm definitely not accustomed to it.

"Is Minamoto already alright?"

"Yeah, I'm okay."

She stands up and moves her body. After stretching, it was obvious the treatment worked.

"It would be good to drink this potion just in case. Oi, here."

I throw a test tube-like container carrying a potion to Minamoto. She caught it with both hands.

"Because you are a guard….. Don't expect a thanks."

Saying that much, Minamoto begins to walk away.

"Ah, oi! …… Good grief….. Tamaki, Hayase, let's go. Let's not split

up.”

“Ah, yes!”

Hayase quickly stands up and gathers the luggage. There was no response from Tamaki because she had already caught up to Umahara.

Hayase and the two others smoothly ordered into a line like troops, Minamoto in the front, Umahara and Tamaki in the middle, Hayase and I in the rear.

Watching Minamoto, I maintained a distance from her and was talked to.

“Why did Yuji become an adventurer? Though I’m an adventurer, I am useless at fighting them…..”

“Well. There’s no special reason. Since my parents did this…. I sort of did the same.”

“I-isn’t such a simple reason scary?”

“I had no talent for it but it couldn’t be helped. It stopped being so bad when I became familiar with it…. Perhaps, is Hayase afraid?”

She looks at me with eyes that seem to burst with tears at any moment and her body shakes.

Bullseye. I mean, I understand.

“….. that’s it. I don’t think I have the power to fight like you guys. I’m just a hindrance to everyone…. When we get attacked I feel like I’m about to die….. Dying is…… it is scary.”

Dying is scary.

It is the same for everyone.

I’m also afraid. Although I can revive, every time I do my mind becomes cloudy and it is painful to see that strange woman in my dream.

This power might also have its limits and I might not revive. There

are so many things I don't know.

However, nothing will change if I am afraid. I know this firsthand.

"N-no good. Even though I'm a hero I'm weak like this…. I'm sorry, please forget I said anything."

"I don't think that."

I put my hand on Hayate's head and patted it with a *pon pon*.

"Y-Yuji-san?"

"Everyone starts like that. We are all afraid. It can't be helped but to feel those things. Because we are alive."

"….. Is….. that so?"

"Ah, Hayase only needs to put in some effort. Though it might seem cheap, your effort won't be betrayed. Continue on at your own pace. Like that, you will surely become a splendid hero."

"Yuji-san…"

She thinks of something and rubs her eyes with her robe. After, when looking up, the atmosphere around her changed from a while ago.

"Thank you. Somehow, I feel courage."

"That's good."

"It is because of Yuji-san's help. Therefore, um…."

Her fingers suddenly begin to fidget around. She clenches her hand and grabs mine.

"U-um!"

"Hmm? What?"

"Yuji….. are you seeing anyone?"

Shuri's smiling face crossed my mind. Though I'm not sure if our relationship counts, it would be embarrassing to say yes.

“I don’t.”

“T-then when I become a hero… we—“

“Increasingly lovey-dovey, aren’t you guys?!”

Taking advantage of the situation, Tamaki broke away from Umahara’s restraint and came over.

To state her intention of participating in our conversation, she used a loud voice.

“H-h-huh!? Tamaki-san, what are you saying!! I wasn’t saying anything in particular like that!!”

Hayase waved her hands and shook her head, blushing deeply.

…… ah.

I’m bad, though I’m not a thickheaded protagonist I didn’t realize.

“……. Oi, Yuji-san? How does it feel to be liked by a cute girl?”

She uses her elbow to nudge Hayase’s melons. This person…. Seriously.

“It’s good that Yuji-san is treating Hayase-san kindly…. Maybe I’ll also aim for Yuji-san~.”

Tamaki crosses her arms to show off.

This is entirely unpleasant.

I understand her trick, there’s no goodwill to me at all. My heart isn’t throbbing, either.

It’s all because something bad might happen to you while we’re here.

“…… Oi, guard.”

……. Ah, it came.

However, it was good timing. The location is good.

Let’s use this guy’s emotions.

“Get away from Tamaki, I dislike it.”

Umahara’s eyes look like peep-holes. Is love blind?

“Ah, yeah. That’s fine.”

“So you get it. Hurry up then.”

“However, you do so as well.”

“What….!?”

Umahara glares at me like a demon. Though in the past I would have shrunk back from this, I’m not even afraid of the real thing now.

“Think back. Tamaki’s expression when she was talking with you compared to when she was talking with us.”

“Hah? She seems to be fine with me no matter what you think. Right, Tamaki?”

“Ahahaha…..”

Tamaki forced a smile and looked around, averting her eyes.

Understanding her meaning, Umahara’s face became red with anger.

“…… Youuuuu……!”

He directed his anger towards me. Well, to him it seems like I took Tamaki away from him. A very unjust and selfish interpretation.

An explosive situation.

“Oi! The stairs room was found! It is a monster house!”

“““Tsu!?””” [TN: All three let out a sound like being stabbed.]

『Monster House』

One of the things I didn’t want to hear from these people.

Though all of us showed our reactions to it, Umahara recovered first.

“Just you wait, Tamaki! I’ll knock all of them down!”

“Ah, wait a moment!?”

Ignoring Tamaki’s restraint, Umahara ran off. Minamoto follows.

He probably just wants to show off a good side to her. I understand this guy well, guys like him don’t make things easy.

“You two wait here! I’ll protect them!”

“M-me too!”

“No! There won’t be any room for me to protect Hayase while fighting in a monster house. You play an important role in treating our wounds. Wait here.”

“O-okay….”

“Tamaki, defend Hayase. You’ll be fine if it is just here.”

“U-understood!” [Tamaki]

I confirm they’ll stay and then run after him.

I’ll be troubled if Tamaki and Hayase die. And not because I’m getting paid.

Since they were running, I picked up my speed; Minamoto and Umahara stopped in front of the door.

Umahara’s shoulders were moving up and down, he must have also just arrived.

“I’ve seen this pattern. If my memory is correct, it is probably the same as that time.”

What Minamoto says is correct.

This magic circle is the same as the one at the monster house in【Rigal’s Den】.

Not just anyone can draw one.

Not unless you were the lord of a dungeon, for example.

“What do we do? Go in?”

“Of course. Nothing in a monster house is scary if you understand it beforehand!”

Umahara stands by with magic. Minamoto pulls out her sword.

“Oi, you. Don’t interfere. Help only if you think it is dangerous.”

Umahara warns me.

“I got it. Tamaki is watching, so struggle your best to show off.”

“Tch……! Minamoto, let’s go!”

“I got it. You don’t need to tell me again.”

As the door is opening Umahara is enthusiastic.

Then, they stiffened.

“Eh?”

“Ah?”

It is very different than what they expected.

Humans are weak to sudden, unanticipated events.

Haste, assessment of the situation, doubt.

Those will affect your ability to take action.

Therefore, I pushed them into the room.

“Ah—“

“Na—“

Now, they are in the room.

Within killing range of the red demon.

There isn’t a lot of demons.

Just one.

“——Kill them, Leadred.”

At my instruction, the horned demon gives a wicked smile.

“——My pleasure.”

She swings her large sword.

Killing

In order to kill, the attack was so fast that it was invisible. Minamoto activated her special ability and raised the hardness of her sword to the maximum in order to deflect the blow.

However, her right arm was severed.

“Ahhhhhhhhhh!!”

The sounds of her last moments. Still, the demon doesn’t wait.

“Ogre Flame.”

Ten King-class flame bulbs emerged and floated in the air. At the wave of her hand, Leadred shot them all at once.

“Spirits of water! Become the shield that defends me! Water Wall!”

Umahara instantly put up a shield, though the attack was not stopped by the Soul-class magic. The blaze poured over Umahara after piercing through his protective wall.

“Uahhhhhhhh!!”

“Kiyaaaaa!?”

This is the room from【Rigal’s Den】, the stair room in the undermost floor. It was impossible for Minamoto and Minami to win.

Even I was at a tie with Leadred. Those who have not even reached my status should not be able to win.

This situation has proven that.

“Haa! Haa!”

“It hurts, it huuurts…..!”

Umahara is barely well enough to use magic. However, he is breathing heavily and has already reached his limit. A pathetic

individual.

Minamoto has lost her fighting spirit. Yep. It is because she lost her dominant arm from the elbow down.

“Oi oi…… Maybe this time, damnit….”

Shouldering her sword covered with blood, the demon approached. Raising both of her eyes, she releases a brutal atmosphere.

“Damnit! Water Spirits!–”

“『Demonic Pressure』”

Leadred invokes her special ability before Umahara finishes chanting.

Using the magic caused Umahara to run out of gas.

“W-what….. gwah!?”

Unable to use magic, Umahara was knocked out of her sight with incredible power.

When he hit the wall, he vomited and crumbled.

“You’re filthy, oi.”

Leadred grabbed Umahara by the hair and threw him to the wall near me.

Fainting, the hero carelessly collapsed so I used some light restoration magic on him.

“Uu…..ah.”

“You know this is your graveyard, right Umahara-kun?”

“Wha-w-what……!?”

Something landed near Umahara. There was a sound of collapsing debris. Minamoto’s head hung limp.

“He-…a-…M-Minamoto….?”

Unable to stand from fear, Umahara crawled to her like a baby.

However, the demon stopped him by coming from the sky.

“Ah-! You recovered!”

“Aheee-!?” [TN: Just a noise.]

Umahara’s eyes crossed and he lost consciousness.

Being able to do that much and unable to use magic, it was a justified reaction. Besides, a little while ago I recall feeling the same.

“Hero-sama.”

“Ah, I got it. Spirits of light, grant us serenity. Magic Heal.”

I recited the spell to heal Umahara and wake him up.

Before he was able grasp the situation, Leadred kicked him.

“Ogoh….”

Ah, that broke some bones. One, maybe two seem to have broken.

“Leadred. I’ll handle this guy and entrust Minamoto-sama to you. Ah, and killing her is no good. Just beat her up.”

“I understand.”

Leadred was obviously enjoying herself. Maybe she was defeated by a hero in the past and treated like Minamoto is now.

“…… Well, should I kill him now?”

Drawing my long sword, I thrust it into Umahara’s foot so that he won’t run away.

“Aah–!?”

His hazy consciousness seems to have be replaced by extreme pain. He was already sloppily crying.

I use my foot to trample on his head, pushing down and grinding against it.

“So? How does it feel to kiss the ground?”

“W-why…… why are you doing this!!”

My question was answered with another question.

“What are you doing, answering my question with another question? Didn’t you learn to not do that in elementary? …. Well, that’s fine. I’m feeling good, so I’ll tell you. Open.”

I remove my foot and pull him by his hair, showing him my status screen.

“Y-you….Y-You’re Katsuragi……?”

“Yeah, the Katsuragi Daichi that all of you have bullied for a long time. With this, do you understand my reason?”

I pull the sword out and bring it to his neck. Understanding what I said, Umahara bowed desperately for his life.

“I-I’m so sorry! I had no choice but to do that stuff!”

“Why?”

“It’s because Samejima was targeting you! I-I didn’t want to do such a thing! I’ll apologize as much as it takes! So, please excus—bu!?”

I struck the top of his head with an axe kick.

“Shut up…… well? Still spitting out lies? Then, wouldn’t Hayase who hasn’t done anything also be Samejima’s target?”

“T-that’s…..”

Umahara started sputtering. He’s likely thinking what to use has his next excuse. Worthless.

“It’s already fine. Die.”

“P-please wait! Please…. Please spare my life! I-I’ll do anything!”

Umahara clinged to my foot in desperation.

Laughable. I’m quite happy.

So, I proposed something.

“Is that so….? I want you to let me violate Tamaki. That will prove your innocence.”

“T-that is….”

“If you don’t want to, then die?”

I pricked his shoulder with the tip of my sword. Umahara shook his head.

“I’ll do it, I’ll do it! Please, let me do it…!”

His desperation was revolting. In exchange his your life, he’ll give up his love…. he’d so anything to save himself.

Well, seeing his appearance like this is pretty fun.

“…….It can’t be helped. Alright. I’ll keep you alive.”

“T-thank you so much…..”

Umahara made a relieved expression after guaranteeing his life. He is thoroughly reflecting on the joy that is life.

“….. Hey, stand up.”

“….. Y-yes.”

I stretched a hand towards Umahara as it didn’t seem like he’d be able to stand up by himself. He took my hand and stood up.

——While I simultaneously stabbed him in the stomach with my sword.

“……..Eh? Ah?”

It seems that Umahara doesn’t understand the situation yet.

“W-why……I-I was cooperating……”

“Ah. That, I lied.”

I replied with a smile. I pulled the sword out and it landed on

Umahara's back with a light plop.

"A…a…lie?"
"Yeah. Unfortunately, I already have a special female. Tamaki holds no appeal for me now…… did you think I was serious?"

"No….. way….."

In one go, his hope disappeared and was replaced with despair.

Umahara's expression lost all sense of life.

"Hero-sama. I finished over here. Ah, but, she fainted."

"Got it. Could you bring her over here? Put her near him."

"Nn. Roger."

Using the ripped cloth at the nape of Minamoto's neck, Leadred threw her on top of Umahara. Umahara awakened and you could hear Minamoto groan.

"He….help…."

"P-please…… stop….."

Ignoring their pleas, I prepared to use my sword. I clad my sword's blade in wind type magic since these guys' bodies are easy to tear rip apart with a bit of force.

"Ah. With this I will get some relief—-"

"——Die."

I make my decision and swing my sword.

Deep red blood and two heads danced in the sky.

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After【Rigal's Den】, half of the classmates withdrew from the front lines. The demons planted extreme fear into their minds.

Then, there's us. With healthy minds we separated into three groups and set forth to capture new dungeons. We hired a guard named

Yuji.

He was a pretty weird guy who acknowledged Hayase's inner strength, and laughed off my obvious harassment. He was nice, and even now he is helping Umahara who has been harassing him again and again.

"I wonder if they are safe…..? Everyone……"

"T-they're fine. Yuji-san and everyone are strong."

"……Hmmmm? Only using Yuji-san's name huh?"

"A, t-there was no particular reason."

….. Though she denied it, her face was a deep red….

Hayase-san was perfectly a prisoner to Yuji-san. Well, considering how she is usually treated it probably can't be helped, I think.

With her love of reading and shyness coupled together, I guess it is hard for people to notice that she is kind-hearted. Hayase-san's personality is enjoyable so it should be fine to leave it alone.

……. However……

"They're slow, those three…."

Looking at my wristwatch, one hour has already passed. Well, it does take time to clear a monster house….

…… Or. The worst case scenario comes to mind.

It's was very unpleasant to watch someone die. I lost my best friend in【Rigal's Den】.

Her name was Hamakaze Shuri-chan. Shuri-chan, Nanami and I were the mascots of the class and the three of us were friends that conversed often.

We encouraged each other to work hard to become heroes for this world.

However, on that day…. Shuri-chan was too late to get away.

Though Nanami tried to rescue her, it was not possible because she was stopped by Samejima.

However, I don't blame Samejima. Because I also prioritized my life. I didn't even try to help.

"……Tsu."

I shook off those troublesome thoughts with a shake.

….. As you would expect, enduring this damp and humid cave is gloomy.

Everything around me looks the same. The only difference is when I can see myself in the crystals' reflections.

Depressing…..

Just when I was thinking that.

"Ah, Yuji-san!"

Nearby, Hayase-san's voice brightened.

It seems that Yuji has come back. I rushed over to him in a trot.

Hayase-san was smiling gently as her hair was gently brushed. However, unlike before he was covered with wounds and blood.

It seems to have been a considerably close call.

"Sorry, I kept you waiting. I ran into some unexpected difficulties. Are you all right?"

"Y-yes! Because Tamaki-san was keeping watch!"

"That so? Tamaki, thank you."

He gently pats my head.

W-well. With this…. I am embarrassed.

"D-don't treat me like a child! Stop patting my head!"

After saying that while embarrassed, he laughs.

“Ah, but, Tamaki—like this I am not worried about you escaping.”

“What?”

In the next moment, I see Hayase-san collapsing behind him.

Wait, what?

“H-Hayase-san!?”

I try to shake off his hand and go to where my classmate fell. However, he gripped with his arm and wouldn’t let go.

“Yuji-san!? Why–let go!!”

“Be at peace. Hayase isn’t dead, I don’t intend to kill her.”

“Huh? W-what are… you trying to say?”

Yuji-san pulls me in closer with his arm and embraces me.

“Y-Yuji-san!? Now is not the time to joke!!”

“I’m not joking. I am serious. I’ve looked forward to this.”

He brought his face close to my ear and whispered sweetly.

“You——I’m going to kill.”

Though, even giving my death sentence he didn’t show any affection or his thoughts.

“W-wh—!?”

Before I finished speaking, a large impact met my neck.

My…… strength….. is fading……

And so, my consciousness flew away.

Promise

“You did well. Leadred.” (Daichi)

I tapped the shoulders of the two female heroes from behind where Leadred put them to see if they were conscious.

Neither were killed. I only wanted to make them faint from a blow to the back of the neck.

“These guys deserved at least this much. What do we do with the other ones?” (Leadred)

“We’ll take the girl with glasses above ground. There is a soldier standing by there, tell him that the party was annihilated and to report it to the royal palace.” (Daichi)

“And the other?” (Leadred)

“Because she has her uses, I’ll make her my slave. However, no killing. I don’t have any slots remaining. Deliver Hayase to the soldier I have waiting there.” (Daichi)

“Roger. Then, I’ll carry her there.” (Leadred)

“Oh yeah, I’ll take Tamaki along to Shuri. Is it good to enter the room now?” (Daichi)

“Shuri is still cleaning up the demons there. Praise her afterwards.” (Leadred)

It was easy to imagine Shuri cutting demons into pieces with enthusiasm.

Pfft. I unintentionally laughed.

“I got it. I’ll join her.” (Daichi)

For a bit now, her behavior has been different. When I held out a fist to Leadred, she offered hers in response. They hit with a bump.

“First of all, three people. Congratulations.” (Leadred)

“Oh. Thanks.” (Daichi)

After saying my thanks, Leadred scratched her cheeks embarrassedly and turned to carry Hayase to the floor’s stair room.

“…… Now then.” (Daichi)

Fainted, this defenseless girl before me would be simple to kill given the circumstances.

But…. She was one of Shuri’s close friends, this girl.

“Hah…. For now, should I carry her along?” (Daichi)

Shouldering Tamaki’s delicate figure, I set out carrying her to the room where I executed the others.

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“Daichi-sama!” (Shuri)

As I opened the door, Shuri who was standing at the entrance of the room rushed to me.

She’s started to become attached me, like a cute animal.

“Welcome home. Were you harmed?” (Shuri)

“I’m unhurt. They were negligent.” (Daichi)

“That so? That’s good.” (Shuri)

Shuri gave a sigh of relief. As it was inevitable, I looked Shuri up and down.

“Apart from that…. I would like to ask Shuri to take care of this person’s treatment…..” (Daichi)

I brought Hero Tamaki Yuina and put her on the floor.

“Eh? ……. This person……. Isn’t she Yui-chan?” (Shuri)

Shuri was surprised at the unexpected reunion. Come to think of it,

these two often talked with each other.

“She is definitely Tamaki Yuina.” (Daichi)

“So bringing her here means… her too?” (Shuri)

“Ah, I plan to kill and make her my slave.” (Daichi)

“Is that….. so.” (Shuri)

Shuri looked down when she heard what I said. It must have been hard to hear that I plan on killing her close friend.

“….. Though it is unfortunate, nothing will stop me no matter what Shuri says. For the sake of bringing Samejima down I must bring strong pieces into my control.” (Daichi)

“…… Yeah.” (Shuri)

Her answer was short, tinged with a little disappointment.

“……. Were you disillusioned?” (Daichi)

“No! It’s just….. That….” (Shuri)

Though she tried to say something Shuri stopped talking. Her eyes were shaking. Seeing that, I understand what she meant.

“But….. Since Yui-chan is pretty…. Um, Daichi-sama will be captured by her….” (Shuri)

“Sorry, Shu–…….. huh?” (Daichi)

I let out a strange sound from her unexpected worry.

The maiden I fell in love with says she is worried….. Even I would be shocked….

….. I guess it is necessary for me to clarify our relationship between us here, then?

“Shuri.” (Daichi)

“Y-yes….” (Shuri)

“I will have no one but Shuri. I don’t need anyone else. As long as Shuri likes me, these feelings of mine will never change.” (Daichi)

“D-Daichi-sama…..” (Shuri)

Her cheeks became pink and she clung to me.

Looking at the situation, I noticed….. This girl….. Isn’t sad at all.

……. Possibly……

“……Shuri.” (Daichi)

“What is it, Daichi-sama? Your love, Shuri, is here.” (Shuri)

“……. Why are you doing this?” (Daichi)

With a start, the girl in my arms’ body stiffened. She timidly looked up and spoke.

“……. Was I found out?” (Shuri)

She playfully stuck out her tongue. She sighed with a ‘Haa’.

“Showing your master such a cute appearance to get praise even though I’m exhausted, please don’t do something like this often.” (Daichi)

“Sorry. I wanted to cheer Daichi-sama up…..” (Shuri)

Using the edge of her clothes, she wiped her teary eyes…… sly.

“Liar.” (Daichi)

“Ouch.” (Shuri)

I flicked her forehead after moving her hair.

“Shuri. Please refrain from things like that in the dungeon. You can do that as much as you like once we are above ground.” (Daichi)

“Then, please embrace me when we go back above ground.” (Shuri)

“Tsu….. Something like that—!?” (Daichi)

Her tongue invaded my mouth. Our saliva mixed. Her eyes were

close. I could hear her rough breathing.

After several seconds of her having total control over the situation, she stopped.

Pulling back her lips by a hair's breadth. Captivating. Her womanly side has definitely started to appear out of her childishness.

"…… Please embrace me okay?" (Shuri)

"……. I got it." (Daichi)

I showed that I gave up by raising my arms. I can't seem to win against Shuri in things like this. As soon as I thought this.

"I did it. I got you to promise." (Shuri)

"The way you did was unfair." (Daichi)

"It's because I endured it for a long time while Daichi-sama was away, please forgive me." (Shuri)

"……. There was no other way then." (Daichi)

I moved my hand back and forth many times through the hair of her leaning head.

Her whole-faced smile tickled my fancy—-.

"…… What am I to do with you two……" (Leadred)

——we stiffened.

We slowly turned around like rusted metal moving with a 'GiGiGi' sound.

The red demon whose gaze could kill shot us a cold look, we could do nothing but give off a strained laugh.

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…… It's cold.

……. Where am I? My memory is hazy. At times like this, it is necessary to slowly recall what happened.

I went into the【Labyrinth of the Sleeping Trance】with Umahara and everyone and Yuji-san went to the Monster House…. Yuji-san came back…. Hayase collapsed….!

The mental picture rose to the surface and became clear.

That's right… I was, by Yuji-san….he struck my neck….

…… Hayase-san it is dangerous!!

"Hayase-san!" (Tamaki)

"Kya-!?" (Shuri)

When I straightened from sleeping a small shriek rose. However, it was familiar. Rather than Hayase-san's, it was very nostalgic.

I saw who the voice came from.

There was the person I abandoned in【Rigal's Den】—Shuri-chan.

"Sh-Shuri-chan?" (Tamaki)

"Ah, you woke up, Yui-chan." (Shuri)

Without a doubt, that was my close friend Hamakaze Juri's bashful smile.

Eh, how? There, Shuri-chan…… unexpectedly, she lived? The amount of demons she would to have had killed…..

….. Was this a dream? I pinched my cheek. It hurt.

It's not…. A dream.

"? Why did you do that, Yui-chan?" (Shuri)

"No… wait a second." (Tamaki)

Naturally, my tears began overflowing. Going against what I thought, my irreplaceable close friend that I thought was dead was alive and I couldn't stop my tears.

"More than that….. Shuri-chan!" (Tamaki)

With my close friend in front of me I was overcome with emotion and spread my arms and dove at her.

Shuri-chan looked at me and stepped back. My embrace was easily refused.

“Sh-Shuri-chan! Why did you avoid me! Though this is our touching reunion!” (Tamaki)

“I’m sorry. This isn’t touching for me.” (Shuri)

Her words were like knifes that struck my chest.

I felt like cold water was just splashed onto my face. I pulled back from my excitement and only self-loathing remained.

…… That’s right. I did something cruel to Shuri-chan. Doing these kinds of things after that, rejection is natural….

“Ah, Shuri. Tamaki woke up?” (Daichi)

“Yes, Daichi-sama. Just now.” (Shuri)

“……..What?” (Tamaki)

—-My consciousness fell into a negative spiral upon hearing the voice of the man who was our guard.

“Yo, Tamaki. How was it fainting for the first time?” (Daichi)

It was the adventurer Yuji.

Provisional Slave

The traitor is in front of me. That evil demon is raising the edge of his mouth.

Moreover, I can't permit Shuri-chan to follow him.

"……. Where did that you who was gentle go off to, I wonder?" (Tamaki)

"The first thing you say is sarcasm….. It was a performance." (Daichi)

Yuji seemed to be elated with the events and quickly gave confirmation.

Even as I am, I plan on escaping when he lets down his guard.

Though I didn't tell that man, I have another special ability.

『Chant Omission』

With only saying the name of the magic, it can be invoked. This can only be acquired after passing a magic status of over 1500.

It is a special ability that is said that very few in this world can use it. Yuji is sure to not think that I can use it.

My lack of restraints are proof of his negligence.

"Heh….. That was a skillful deceit. Particularly since Hayase-san seems to have liked you?" (Tamaki)

"That was surprising. It was hard to do that to Hayase. Since I only love Shuri." (Daichi)

"A-……" (Tamaki)

Yuji hugged Shuri-chan from behind. A chill sent shivers down my spine.

My important close friend was being played with by such a man. That reason alone was plenty for me to attack.

“No more! Shuri-chan, duck!” (Tamaki)

I launch magic at him at point-blank range.

“Freezing Lance!” (Tamaki)

I aimed at his face with the lance held in my hands in order to pierce it. However, it was stopped just before by an unexpected hand.

“…… Yui-chan, what are you doing?” (Shuri)

The girl who caught the tip of the spear wore an expression of anger. Her gaze was filled with hostility towards me.

Though she was filling the room with a sensation that would make me want to run, I didn’t turn away.

I absolutely have to bring her back.

“Did you just try to kill my important Daichi-sama?” (Shuri)

“T-that’s not it! I was trying to save Shuri-chan!” (Tamaki)

“After you abandoned me at that time, you say something like that?” (Shuri)

“——!” (Tamaki)

Those cutting words pierced my chest.

However, nothing that she said was wrong. I understand. I know that I did such a thing.

That’s why I was impatient. I must be able to talk some sense into Shuri-chan by any means.

I began to denounce the man next to her.

“I’m sorry! I’ll apologize as much as you want! I want you to hear me out first!” (Tamaki)

“What is it?” (Shuri)

“Yuji is dangerous! It’s fine if it is only for now but, please believe me, come here!” (Tamaki)

“Daichi-sama is dangerous?” (Shuri)

“Yes! This guy attacked me and Hayase-san….. Perhaps, Umahara and Minamoto-san were as well.” (Tamaki)

“If you are talking about those two, I killed them you know?” (Daichi)

“Attack——eh, kill……? Eh?” (Tamaki)

I can’t believe what I just heard.

Two heroes were killed?

By an ordinary adventurer?

Or else….. Shuri-chan?

“W-what do you mean….?” (Tamaki)

“It’s like this. Catch.” (Daichi)

The response wasn’t from Shuri-chan, but Yuji. Suddenly, something round was tossed towards me and I managed to catch it.

There was a disgusting feeling on my hand.

It wasn’t a ball.

The eyes were obviously crying. The teeth were missing. A crooked nose. Part of the blonde hair was reddish brown.

I was holding my classmate’s severed head.

“Uaaaaaaaaaaah!?” (Tamaki)

In order to never see it again, I threw it away and felt nauseous.

“Ooeh! Haa…..haaa….” (Tamaki)

“Oi oi. Is that how you treat your classmate’s head? Treat it delicately.” (Daichi)

He looked at me without innocence. He is enjoying seeing me

ridiculed.

Such a…… he's crazy…..!

"You…. Fiend…..!" (Tamaki)

"You've said enough, as you are blind to your own shortcomings. Right, Shuri?" (Daichi)

"Hai, Daichi-sama. It is as you said." (Shuri)

"Shuri-chan….." (Tamaki)

She must have been brainwashed strongly. Her true feelings must be of suffering.

It is vexing that I don't have the power to do anything.

The power to do what?

Who's the hero?

I can't even save one friend that is in front of me.

"….. What do you want to do?" (Tamaki)

"Ah?" (Daichi)

"My close friend manipulated, myself captured….. Do you bare a grudge against the kingdom!?" (Tamaki)

"…….. Well, that and the reality aren't too different." (Daichi)

Yuji gripped the neck of me who was sitting down and rose me up. I was lifted easily and my feet were off the ground.

"Ka-…….ha……" (Tamaki)

My throat was constricted and it became hard to breathe.

……Can't……Breathe…….

"I…… I will take my revenge on you all. Especially Samejima." (Daichi)

"Why…… Same…..jima….?" (Tamaki)

“You still haven’t understood? Shuri even called my true name some time ago.” (Daichi)

Shuri-chan did……?

I think as my consciousness is fading.

She definitely called Yuji Daichi-sama.

Daichi…..?

Did I know someone with a name like that……. Ah.

I did. There was one person.

Just as we did to Shuri-chan, we deserted that boy on that day.

His name was Katsuragi Daichi. The child that the class bullied.

N-no way…….

He couldn’t be alive. I had saw. At that time, his body had been eaten by a demon.

This is….. A lie…..

“…… Looks like you realized.” (Daichi)

“Ah-“ (Tamaki)

I was unexpectedly let go and I fell. I landed on my butt.

Ouch, it was painful.

“Yuji is just a false name. My real name is Katsuragi Daichi. I have returned all the way from hell to take my revenge.” (Daichi)

He laughed with a smile as he put the sword that was on his waist up to my neck.

It was eerie, and my mind was completely blurred out with fear. My teeth were noisy and wouldn’t stop chattering with a ‘GachiGachi’. Tears started to overflow, too.

It was because the blood thirst emanating from him was the real

thing. Otherwise I would never have been frightened by someone like Katsuragi.

I was sure that they wouldn't give me another chance. The only thing I could think of was that I would be killed.

…… Ah, so this is where I will die…..

Knowing that『Death』was coming, all of my memories began to surface…. I'm scared.

Dying….. Is scaryyyyyyy……

"……. Well, Tamaki. I will give you a choice." (Daichi)

"W-what…..?" (Tamaki)

"Will you die here and lose your life for the rest of time? Or, will you devote your life as my slave?" (Daichi)

Katsuragi offered a sweet temptation.

"You can be together Shuri after becoming my slave, and I also promise to not harm you further." (Daichi)

"R-really?" (Tamaki)

"However, the moment you show any odd behavior to the demon or I… well, Shuri will mercilessly kill you if that happens. What do you think, Tamaki?" (Daichi)

"I-I will become your slave! Please! I'll devote my life to you! S-so please, don't kill me!" (Tamaki)

My words naturally clung to the option that gave me hope.

I want to live. I won't die. That is reason enough.

Thinking about it isn't necessary. I would have been troubled if I hesitated and he changed his mind.

"Is that so? A wise choice, Tamaki. You have my praise." (Daichi)

"T-thank you." (Tamaki)

Seeming satisfied by my immediate response, he withdrew the sword and sheathed it.

Released from their blood thirst, I felt very alive.

“Tamaki Yuina. You are now my provisional slave.” (Daichi)

This day, I went from being a hero to Katsuragi Daichi’s slave.

Changing of Floors

Because we added Tamaki as a party member after finishing our revenge, our focus switched to capturing the dungeon.

Why did we come to this dungeon to begin with?

To acquire and train new people. Listening to what Leadred had to say, I understood well than I am a hero.

However, the information was inconsistent.

I'm told that she was defeated by the hero Terias and sealed in that dungeon. And then, after a long time had passed, a woman unfastened the seal placed on her.

However, she was told that『Someday, our hero will appear without fail. That person will be an inhabitant from hell and will bring glory.』so she had been waiting there for a long time.

When I asked her whether I was good enough to be the hero to『Revenge the Resented』she reported that I was suited it fine.

Thinking back on the conversation, there might be others like Leadred scattered in various dungeons that I could use as my followers.

Leadred had served as the leader of a special attack unit and didn't seem to know what ends her comrades met with as she was the first sealed.

Then, the conclusion was to capture the nearby dungeon.

I want a full set of these big guns. It wouldn't do if they were killed.

This is coming from the four people in the front line, including the unparalleled me…. Huh? Is it just me or is everyone in the front line?

"This corpse seems to be a living corpse, stay dead!" (Shuri)

Jumping at the heart area of the Wight from the left side, Shuri plunges forward even more.

“You think a pile of bones like you could hurt me!? Aah!?” (Tamaki)

Dancing through the air, her war sword slices through a massive amount of the bone corpses as though they were nonexistent.

“Freezing Lance!” (Tamaki)

Tamaki invoked an ice lance and aimed it at a group of Wight Lancers, piercing and knocking them down.

“It is futile no matter how many of you guys show up.” (Daichi)

Leading the attack, I challenged the Wight Lancers while amongst them, slashing them with my sword.

I invoked my Special Ability『Magician of Slaughter』. All Wight Lancers within a radius of ten meters of my target were annihilated. The amount remaining was approximately one hundred.

If that’s the case, I can finish the rest myself then.

“You guys! All members fall behind me!” (Daichi)

Obeying orders, Shuri, Leadred, and Tamaki withdrew. After confirming, I put power into my hand.

“Berserk Tempest!” (Daichi)

Using chant omission, I cast an Emperor-class magic that returned the Wights to ordinary corpses.

“Kikikikikiki…..” (100 Dying Wights)

The sound of bones clattering together was noisy. However, the loud noise was overshadowed. We saw the staircase.

With this, Floor 30 was cleared.

“Wa! Y-yay! We broke through the monster house!” (Tamaki)

Tamaki excitedly came up to us.

“This much is natural right?” (Shuri)

“I don’t mean to rejoice every time.” (Leadred)

“Let’s immediately go to the next floor. Time is precious.” (Daichi)

Without incident, we descend the staircase.

“……..Eeeh…….” (Tamaki)

I decided to ignore Tamaki’s depressed voice.

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That monster house from the last floor is no longer any threat for us.

Rather, it is welcomed.

Because the monster house is quite efficient for acquiring experience.

“Tamaki, show me your status.” (Daichi)

“Y-yes.” (Tamaki)

“……..Yui-chan? You should use the honorific as you are already a slave of Daichi-sama.” (Shuri)

“I-I understand, Shuri-chan…. So, please stop making that face? It’s scary?” (Tamaki)

“If it is for Daichi-sama I will become a prajna.” (Shuri)
[TN: Google search for pajna— direct insight into the truth taught by the Buddha, as a faculty required to attain enlightenment.]

“…… Shuri has become as lovely as I could wish for.” (Daichi)

“T-that sort of….. If it is fine with Daichi-sama…. Then I…. Would be your wife…..” (Shuri)

“……. How many times a day do they do this…..” (Tamaki)

“That’s right. To the extent that I wasn’t able to meet today, it’s rather much more than usual. I think I see it at least once in the morning and night.” (Leadred)

“Somehow, that hurts to hear.” (Tamaki)

“Give it up. I got used to it.” (Leadred)

Interrupting the conversation, I opened mine and Tamaki’s status.

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Katsuragi Daichi Occupation: Hero Level 68

Stamina: 4250

Magic: 5600→4100

Physical: 4900

Endurance: 4500

Agility: 2900

Special Abilities:

『Steel Heart』: During battle, Endurance doubles. Poison, Paralysis, Sleep, and Berserk have a 1/3 chance of failing.

『Persistent Soul』: Magic cannot be depleted below 100.

『Wight King』: Able to make contracts with living beings near death, to revive them and make them obey to your will. Every time the user dies twice, increases the limit of the number of contracts. Currently, there are no open slots.

『Absolute Command』: Appears when those bound by a contract are lower leveled than the Wight King. Any order will be accepted by the slave until cancelled.

『Magician of Slaughter』: Killed targets within a radius of ten meters will deal the same damage to all units of the same type.

『Cruel Mind』: When you kill three members of the same species, your physical attacks against that species gain a paralytic poison effect.

『Chant Omission』: When magic is invoked, the chant may be removed. However, Consumption Magic is one. However, the mana

consumption increases by fifty percent.

Unique Ability:

『Revenge of the Resented』: No matter how many times you die, power stored in the abyss of death is taken for revival.

Current Number of Deaths → 7

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Hamakaze Shuri Occupation: High-Grade Slave Level 72

Stamina: 2800

Magic: 2940

Physical: 2300

Endurance: 1670

Agility: 1230

Special Abilities:

『Auto Heal 』: Heals three hundred stamina every ten minutes.

『Loyal Heart』: When the master’s life is in danger, all statuses increase by 80%.

『Chant Omission』: When magic is invoked, the chant may be removed. However, Consumption Magic is one. However, the mana consumption increases by 50%.

『Demon Killing』: Limit Release ability. All of the owner’s status values double. However, there is a five minute time limit. After use, the Stamina value will become zero and the user will faint.

Special Status: 『High-Grade Slave』 Owner → Katsuragi Daichi.

All attacks against him are sealed. Compulsory submission until release.

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Akina Leadred Occupation: High-Grade Slave Level 79

Stamina: 6900

Magic: 5240

Physical: 7120

Endurance: 4200

Agility: 5380

Special Abilities:

『Demonic Pressure』: Magic is reduced by one hundred times the difference between the levels of the caster and the target. Until caster is defeated, cannot be healed.

『Ogre Flame』: Uses 100 magic. Fires a King-class fireball with Chanting Omission.

『Chant Omission』: When magic is invoked, the chant may be removed. However, Consumption Magic is one. However, the mana consumption increases by 50%.

Special Status: 『High-Grade Slave』 Owner → Katsuragi Daichi.

All attacks against him are sealed. Compulsory submission until release.

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Rin Wade Occupation: High-Grade Slave Level 37

Stamina: 240

Magic: 210

Physical: 300

Endurance: 95

Agility: 110

Special Status:『High-Grade Slave』Owner → Katsuragi Daichi.

All attacks against him are sealed. Compulsory submission until release.

『Exercising a Command』: Hayase Fuuko's guard of the royal palace. Return, Watch, Report, Assist. Do not allow Hayase Fuuko to be harmed and treat her as you would Katsuragi Daichi.

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Tamaki Yuina Occupation: Hero Level 28

Stamina: 720

Magic: 1780

Physical: 1100

Endurance: 840

Agility: 350

Special Abilities:

『Witch of Freezing』: The effect of the ice magic is increased by one class. However, God-class magic is not increased.

『Chant Omission』: When magic is invoked, the chant may be removed. However, Consumption Magic is one. However, the mana consumption increases by 50%.

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"Uwah, so weak!" (Leadred)

Leadred-san, thank you for your frank impression. Certainly, it isn't just numerical values in combat, but those numbers show no signs of being useful in combat.

"…… Well then, at best you can be used as a shield….." (Daichi)

“That treatment is cruel, master!?” (Tamaki)

“Well, you are a slave…. Isn’t it your role to protect the head?” (Daichi)

“Uuu…….. T-that is so.” (Tamaki)

“Thus, Tamaki. You will desperately defend Shuri. If she dies, so do you.” (Daichi)

“She’s not the head!? But I got it!” (Tamaki)

Tamaki had become motivated when I mentioned she was to protect Shuri.

……. Well, I’ll kill her eventually.

“…. Hey, Hero-sama. What will you do next? Raise her level?” (Leadred)

“I have no obligation to do that, she will probably die before we reach the lower floors.” (Daichi)

“Understood. Well, let’s be off then.” (Leadred)

We set out with our vanguard as Leadred, who has our biggest battle potential.

For the time being, we stop at floor 40 to rest. I plan in my head.

Peculiarly, our enemy’s war potentials haven’t increased for a long time. Can we force our status values go up somewhat if we keep fighting them?

“Umu…… as it is, we’ve spent quite a lot of time on floor 40.” (Daichi)

“I wonder. Maybe, it’ll take time to find the stair room, but I don’t think the battle itself will be difficult” (Leadred)

“Since Leadred says that is the case, I am relieved.” (Daichi)

“…….. The dungeon capture up to here has been easy……. As expected of master!” (Tamaki)

“It is natural when you are with Daichi-sama. Those damned heroes don’t have the eyes to see Daichi-sama’s true character.” (Shuri)

….. Ah, Shuri-san. You originally sided with those damned heroes……

I mean, this is Tamaki’s only the second time she has explored a dungeon….. Should I be amused?

“…….. Anyways, do not relax your guard. Use this time to focus.” (Daichi)

I turned to catch the attention of the two people who were behind me making noise.

Afterwards, we reached floor 40’s stairs room without difficulty as predicted by Leadred.

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Though we arrived at the stairs room using Leadred’s intuition, floor 40 was an exception. Her presence detention was obstructed by magic that was leaked out from the crystals that cover the walls.

It seems to fill this region of the floor, giving each room an identical feeling as the last.

Because of this, we smashed through all of the rooms on the floor. We are in the last room.

“Well then, are you ready?” (Daichi)

I ask the members while I place my hand on the door. Shuri and Leadred nod, Tamaki nods after seeing their responses.

With the exception of Leadred, we invoke magic to immediately.

By the way, I don’t use『Berserk Tempest』. I don’t have enough magic to use Emperor-class magic many times. It will be my trump card.

Though my magic can’t drop below 100, my mental strength falls considerably. If possible, I don’t want to lose my calm judgment.

“Alright….. Let’s go.” (Daichi)

Taking advantage of my strength, I open the massive door in one go and rush in.

However, the opponent is nowhere to be seen. —Ah, no.

From experience, rooms with stairs had to have demons. Since it was not in front, behind, to the left or to the right there was only one direction it could be.

“Above!” (Daichi)

Everyone looked up at the ceiling in response to my voice.

Within our gaze, using a hundred feet to cling against a wall, was a giant centipede that was wearing jet-black armor that was shooting us a penetrating glare.

Attack of Desperation

“Sonic Wave!” (Daichi)

“Wind Slice!” (Shuri)

“Ice Blizzard!” (Tamaki)

The three of us rapid-fire Spirit and Soul-class magic.

Though we were trying to seal the centipede’s movements, its strong armor repelled the wind blades and Tamaki’s blizzard only froze a few of the legs.

“Pay attention! That centipede’s armor is considerably tough!” (Leadred)

Following our magic assault, Leadred shouted out.

“Uraah!!” (Leadred)

She burst out with a rotating blade. The sound of metal clashing with metal echoed.

The instant she added the rotation, Leadred overcame its resistance and cut through its long body—at least I think she did, though there seems to be no cut on it. The centipede doesn’t seem to be in pain either.

“Shaaaaaa!!” (Centipede)

The centipede wriggled its body and descended from the walls to the ground. It rushed at us when we slowed our assault.

“Heeee!?” (Tamaki)

“Disgusting!” (Shuri)

We each jump out of the way to the left and right. Leadred also managed to escape from the centipede’s back.

However, Leadred's slashes didn't cease. Our magic also didn't seem to be doing much damage.

"This centipede is rather troublesome." (Daichi)

"I confirmed that its whole body is covered with that armor when jumping onto it before." (Leadred)

"Nevertheless, even if its skin and armor are stacked it won't stop us from killing it one way or another." (Shuri)

Standing next to Leadred, Shuri expressed a warlike smile while encouraging us.

Only the legs and face lack the armor. The risk is definitely increased when you aim at its face. By process of elimination, we have no choice but to stop its movement and aim at its legs.

"From here on Shuri and I will hold its attention!! Meanwhile, Tamaki freeze its legs and Leadred cut through them!!"

""Your will!"" (Tamaki, Shuri, Leadred)

Shuri and I immediately struck the centipede's face with a Spirit-class Fireball. It bent towards us and had its completely faced us.

It was entirely fixated on us.

Now!

""Sacred spirits, illuminate us with your light! Shining!"" (Daichi, Shuri)

Using our flash at the same time, we stole the centipede's sight. My party members aren't idiots who would miss this timing.

"Spirits of Ice, freeze my enemy! Ice Blizzard!" (Tamaki)

Determining that this fight would drag out, Tamaki chanted the Ice Blizzard to decrease its mana consumption.

The legs on the centipede were frozen on one side, causing it to slip and lose its balance.

"Line Drive!" (Leadred)

Leadred raised her sword over her head and a red line streamed out, acting as an extension of the blade as she slashed off the centipede's legs.

What, that's–! So cool! Amazing, Leadred!

Our excitement didn't stop and we swiftly launched magic at its face.

"Storm of Slaughter!" (Daichi)

"Wind Slice!" (Shuri)

"Freezing Lance!" (Tamaki)

"Demon Flame!" (Leadred)

All four of the shots hit. The centipede's face became messy and burned black.

It started convulsing with a *PikuPiku*, and eventually stopped.

"…… Haaa… We did it…" (Tamaki)

Seeing it stop moving, Tamaki weakly sat down. The tension ceased.

Well, we would have had a hard time if we didn't have Leadred. It can't be helped that she would say that since she isn't accustomed to fights of this level.

Shuri also had an expression of exhaustion.

Umu. We should rest here for a bit. I used up a considerable amount of my magic power. Verifying this by saying 'Open', I went from 5000 to 870. Shuri was also at 300.

By nature of the dungeon, there are no demons after you defeat the floor's lord at the stairs room.

Therefore, we can rest at ease.

"Everyone! We'll rest here. We'll separate into two groups—-" (Daichi)

——While trying to explain, I was drowned out by a loud noise. What was that?

There was the sound of an explosion behind us.

“Wha–!?” (Daichi)

Turning around in a rush, the centipede that was there a moment ago vanished.

Suicide? No, could it have been for some other reason…..?

I tried to calm myself by trying to find the reason.

Concerning the result, the latter was the right answer.

“…… Oi oi, you’re kidding right…..” (Daichi)

I couldn’t believe what I was seeing. The crystals in the room began shining and the light gathered where the corpse of the centipede used to be.

The light gradually came together to create a familiar shape.

Before long the light finished aggregating as the last light joined the set and burst to reveal a jet-black body. Armor covered its entire body now.

A sharp horn grew from the headpiece of its armor.

Again, the challenger Revenger appears before us and roars.

“Kishaaaaaa!!” (Centipede)

It sounded the gong of the game’s restart.

“Tamaki! Protect Shuri with everything you have!” (Daichi)

I ordered them to group together, who were sure to have been the most fatigued of us, and leapt to the sky.

Leadred also leapt similarly.

The attacks we used against its legs from before would do no good. It is essential that we attack the exposed skin on its face near the horn. In that case, the best choice we have is to bet on a blow from behind.

“Uooooh!” (Daichi)

“Aaaaah!” (Leadred)

Leadred and I begin attacking it with our swords. However, we were unable to wound it this time.

“Wha–!?” (Leadred)

Leadred was unable to hide her surprise.

“It is getting increasingly stronger!” (Leadred)

“Tch! So troublesome!” (Daichi)

Kicking off of the armor, I separated from the centipede. However, the centipede chose that instant to attack.

“Wind!”

I threw wind magic at my feet, forcibly avoiding him.

The centipede collides with the wall. A loud crushing sound is heard. The wall was dented by the strong horn.

Thinking about being pierced by that horn causes me to shudder. And now, I understand that to win I can’t be hit by that attack.

“Leadred! Are you unable to break its armor!?” (Daichi)

“I can! …… I want to say, but that reinforced armor completely withstands my attacks…. At best, I might be able to put a crack in it.” (Leadred)

It’s impossible for Leadred, our strongest demon……?

……. There must be some other way. Resolve yourself.

“Shuri!” (Daichi)

“Hai!” (Shuri)

Calling her name, Shuri immediately came to me. She seems to already understand my idea. She waited with open arms.

I buried my face in her warm embrace.

“…… Just a bit ago, you said that doing this was no good…..” (Shuri)

“Sorry. Just for a bit.” (Daichi)

“…… It can’t be helped because you are my master, Daichi-sama.” (Shuri)

Shuri gently patted my back. Courage surged through me.

“Shuri.” (Daichi)

“What is it?” (Shuri)

“…… I’m, going to die for a little while. It doesn’t look like I can win.” (Daichi)

“……. I’m sorry, Daichi-sama. It’s because I am always so useless……” (Shuri)

“Shuri doesn’t have to worry. You give me courage. You heal me. That alone is enough.” (Daichi)

“Daichi-sama…..” (Shuri)

I want to defend her. I don’t want her to die.

I think I might be able to become a real hero.

“Thank you, Shuri……. Though I sorely wanted us to be together longer, it seems like that thing over there won’t wait any longer.” (Daichi)

Looking up, the centipede was posed to charge.

This was certainly the norm for us.

“It is regrettable.” (Shuri)

“I think so too. Therefore, when I revive….. Please allow me to rest my head on your lap.” (Daichi)

“Yes.” (Shuri)

Shuri acknowledged me with her smiling face.

With that I am now the strongest. Nothing can scare me.

“Shuri, escape to over there. Leadred, I ask you to care for her while I am dead.” (Daichi)

“Leave it to me, Hero-sama.” (Leadred)

She stepped back and took position so as to protect Shuri.

Seeing that, I put all of my focus on the pest in front of me.

It was simple to say so. However, it is difficult to do.

After directly receiving that guy’s attack, I plan shove my arm inside of his mouth and drive magic into it.

I take a stance and lower my waist to endure the coming impact. I would die in vain if I don’t stop its momentum here.

“Earth Chain!” (Daichi)

Both of my feet become solidly fixed to the ground with the earth chain.

“Kikikikikikii!!” (Centipede)

I watch the centipede draw closer at a high speed. The lethal horn that will kill me approaches.

It pointed at my stomach and pierced through me.

Severe pain ran through my entire body.

“————-!!” (Daichi)

I desperately endured wanting to cry out. Blood began to overflow from my mouth. My field of vision became dark. My legs shivered and lost strength.

However, I ignored all of it.

All of my concentration was on killing this thing…..!

“AaaaaaaAAAAAH!!” (Daichi)

I strained to muster up strength.

The result of my perfect countermeasure stopped its momentum completely. The centipede tried to escape, but I seized its headpiece.

Its weak point was exposed.

I invaded its mouth with my arm.

“Berserk…….” (Daichi)

The centipede let out some kind of shriek. Blood streamed from my arm. It worked out somehow.

This guy is dead. That much is true.

I speak the word that will finish the chant.

“Tempeeeeeeeeest!!” (Daichi)

The insect’s body becomes a lump of flesh, scattering.

Making a Second Demonic Slave

“Welcome back from the nether world, Daichi-sama.” (Shuri)

“…… I’m back, Shuri.” (Daichi)

According to my request, Shuri welcomed me back from my eighth death with a lap pillow.

……. That dream, I didn’t see it this time….. Though I thought about complaining to her this time, I’m strangely sad. I’m also happy that I won’t die in the dream anymore.

It’s a strange feeling.

“Eh? Huh? How are you alive?” (Tamaki)

Such a voice was heard to the side.

The wording Tamaki chose for my name was coarse.

Perhaps, I guess you were pleased that I died.

“Tamaki.” (Daichi)

“Y-yes! What is it!?” (Tamaki)

Calling her name, Tamaki started using honorific language in a panic. It was easy to imagine that she was dripping with cold sweat.

Such an absurd Tamaki, I laughed.

“W-what are you laughing about, Master!?” (Tamaki)

“No, it’s nothing. Even there is no way you can deceive me, you try so hard……..” (Daichi)

“There’s no other way right? Because, master is scary….” (Tamaki)

“So, why would you….. You’ve said enough. Ah-, that’s dangerous. My stomach is in pain because I’ve laughed too much.

“Ah! Master is an idiot!” (Tamaki)

We brought down the powerful enemy and were wrapped in a sociable atmosphere.

Oh, I’m seriously laughing now.

……. Well, I’ve already died eight times……

The number of slave slots are sure to increase.

Looking at the attitude displayed a little while ago, there seems to be no reflection coming from this fellow.

……..

“Tamaki” (Daichi)

“What is it?” (Tamaki)

“For the time being……. Die?” (Daichi)

“……. Eh?” (Tamaki)

I pointed my index finger at her, and Leadred suddenly stabbed through Tamaki’s left breast from behind.

“…….. E-, h-…..uh?” (Tamaki)

“Ogre Flame” (Leadred)

To make sure Tamaki was completely dead, Leadred scorched her face with the flames.

“Leadred. Do not kill her immediately. I had you miss her vitals on purpose.” (Daichi)

“Ah, I understand.” (Leadred)

She realized that Tamaki’s hand was twitching little by little.

It’s hot, it’s painful, it’s agonizing.

These feelings are sure to rule her mind. To a certain extent, as time passes the pain will lessen, though in exchange the terror of death thickens.

When death is concerned, I am already a veteran.

I mostly understand what humans think about as they die.

“However, Leadred….. Why didn’t you finish her off earlier? Didn’t I say to ‘take care of that person’?”

I was referring to Tamaki, not the centipede when I said ‘person’. There was no need to enslave a giant centipede….. To begin with, I was aiming to exterminate the centipede. I couldn’t afford to enslave a demon that would disappear and disperse when defeated.

I was concerned that Tamaki would escape after my death.

With that I understood that she hadn’t been made into a complete slave yet. I expected that she did not sincerely feel loyalty to me.

Would she have been fine escaping by herself, or would she have brought Shuri with her? She could have picked either.

When I talked to Leadred about my past, she also told me of hers.

She used to be a demon called the『Horrific Killer』. Therefore, she would have no hesitation in killing humans.

However, I still asked why she would treat her like that….

“Weeeell, hey. Isn’t this woman a terrible hero?” (Leadred)

“That’s true.” (Daichi)

“Then, I thought that you would savor seeing her suffer and would cheer you up.” (Leadred)

“…… Leadred…….” (Daichi)

I was touched. Tears fell from her gentle consideration for me.

Seeing my behavior as so different from my normal, she averted her gaze. Red that was not the color of her skin began to appear on her

cheeks.

“Thank you so much.” (Daichi)

“Y-yeah. Though, please cease patting my head……. It is embarrassing.” (Leadred)

“Hmm? What? I couldn’t hear you that well….” (Daichi)

In order to once again see Leadred’s rare ‘dere’ side, I activated my deafness skills.

“B-be quiet! Aside from that, deal with this person!” (Leadred)

She pulls her sword out of Tamaki and points it at me.

“She’s not longer breathing! ……. You should enslaver her quickly. Its better when the corpse is fresh.” (Leadred)

“You’re right. Since Leadred is embarrassed I’ll stop poking fun at her and commence making Tamaki into a slave.” (Daichi)

“Are you even listening!?” (Leadred)

Ignoring Leadred’s thrust, I laid Tamaki’s corpse out on the floor.

“You. Now, I bestow upon you a new life. I give you a second life. Here, you pledge a contract with me and will fulfill your duty as my servant. Wight Back!”

Tamaki’s body began mending itself. The wound on her chest closed and the parts of her face that were burnt each begin repairing themselves.

With this, Tamaki’s transformation into a slave is complete. She will awaken soon. The reaction that I will never be tired of seeing is sure to happen.

Tamaki can no longer run away.

“……. Daichi-sama.” (Shuri)

While I was looking after Tamaki, Shuri who became bored tapped her lap with a ‘PonPon’.

I don’t think a man who would deny this invitation exists.

“Leadred. This is a good time to take a rest. Stand watch over Tamaki while I go dream again.” (Daichi)

“And if she runs?” (Leadred)

“Killing her with Demonic Pressure or something would be wasteful, so take away her means of attacking. I recommend breaking a bone or two.” (Daichi)

“I understand. I’ll heal her as much as I feel like.” (Leadred)

Leadred waved her hand. Her glance was already fixed on Tamaki.

…… I don’t think that she wants to see us flirting.

“In that case, Shuri. Once again I am indebted to you.” (Daichi)

“I don’t mind. Please rest however long you wish. I enjoy Daichi-sama’s sleeping face.” (Shuri)

Since Shuri said so sincerely, I couldn’t laugh.

However, I feel like I’m taking advantage of her gentle nature.

I can’t understand why she is so devoted….. Really.

I completely relax, thoroughly enjoying the soft and comfortable elasticity, and fall into a deep sleep.

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After each of us taking turns resting for several hours to regain our magic power, we resume the dungeon capturing as before.

The three of us were talking about the centipede, with Leadred and Shuri in the rear.

Tamaki was made to keep the demons some company by herself. Incidentally, since I used『Absolute Command』on her to disallow her from talking, she cannot speak.

After she revived as a slave, Tamaki said various things and was noisy. Abusive language was poured on me. She was very

persistent.

As I was rather fed up with her, I punished her by making her slay demons solo. To keep her level from increasing, Shuri and Leadred kill the demons with magic.

I'll knock Tamaki down indirectly by keeping her from gaining experience.

"That centipede from before. Don't you think it caused our levels to raise suddenly?" (Daichi)

Talking about the fight in stairs room was uncomfortable. Even though it was the 40th Floor, it had a strength to boast about.

That crystal revived and fortified it.

Obviously strange.

"That's right. Though compared to you two I couldn't help because I am powerless….." (Shuri)

"I was also surprised. With this, there are three times that my sword couldn't cut through something. Though, with this I have an idea about the dungeon's guardian." (Leadred)

The proud Leadred was smiling.

"Is that true!?" (Daichi)

"Ah. That detestable double layered armor. The demon's revival from magic. At any rate, with armor hard enough that I can't cut through there is only one other person it could be. However…." (Leadred)

"Who is it?" (Daichi)

"That person has a considerably tiresome personality. Probably, we won't be able to avoid a fight." (Leadred)

"Eh, seriously?" (Daichi)

I had thought that if we came across someone like Leadred, we could persuade them. It would be best to end everything just by talking.

However, I'm afraid that it seems we won't be able to use that method.

"Seriously. That guy won't listen to what you say because he won't judge you as worth serving." (Leadred)

"Is that so….." (Daichi)

"Though, wouldn't Daichi-sama's power to enslave work?" (Shuri)

"Even so, avoiding a fight is indispensable, above all there aren't any slots open." (Daichi)

Though I could release Tamaki in exchange for the overwhelming uses of the demon, it is convenient to have Tamaki as a pawn under my control.

I died twice during the fight with Leadred, so I'll certainly end up dying some more. It's a hunch I have.

"Furthermore, it's strength is comparable to mine." (Leadred)

"How…… What's the name of this demon?" (Shuri)

Assuming he is important, Shuri asked Leadred.

"Fantra Angas. In those days, he was a tactician and a master of the strongest Ice magic."

I Don’t Understand

After taking out the enemy on the 40th Floor, floors 41-49 were uneventful.

When I died my status values increased by 1000 each, with Leadred and Shuri’s rising by 500 in the same way. Tamaki’s magic rose to over 2500, though her other stat increases were poor. It was different from Shuri’s who expanded everything as an average, so maybe she is a specialist type.

No one obtained a new special ability. However, we’ve become the highest leveled adventurers in the region.

Thinking the sailing was smooth, we stumbled into the stairs room on the 60th Floor. Now for the critically acclaimed battle.

“Damn him! He’s annoying!” (Leadred)

Next to me, Leadred cursed him.

I understand what she means. I’ve also become exhausted.

“He won’t stop moving……! Magic isn’t effective either, you’re fucking kidding me!” (Leadred)

Leadred thrusted at the hostile tiny demon. However, he avoided it by stepping to the right and retaliated with a head-butt to her side.

However, it didn’t damage Leadred because its body was soft like jelly. Even so, it wasn’t limited to physical damage.

“Tch! Poison!” (Leadred)

Leadred jumped far back to where Shuri was on standby so she could treat her with Light restoration magic.

In other words, the only current combatants were Tamaki and I.

“Hey, what is this guy…” (Daichi)

I looked at the tiny demon's body jiggling in front of me—Leadred also didn't know its name so I named it—it was a Poison Slime.

Opening the door, when we saw this fellow by himself we were sure we'd win.

It wasn't an exaggeration to say we were looking at an instant kill. Though after examining it, we were amazed.

Its Wit stat and reaction speed were crazy. We couldn't hit its body with magic. Even touching it were afflict us with a special condition from its『Deadly Poison』.

This guy is definitely not an ordinary slime. I've never known a slime to be this powerful.

Though Shuri can fortunately use recovery magic, the truth is that we can't be careless with the『Poison』when we attack.

Listening to Leadred's story a little while ago, this slime might be one of Fantra's strategis.

His aim might be to consume our Stamina and Magic statuses.

It has been an hour.

I mean this fits that guy's strategy brilliantly.

"One moment Katsuragi! Do you not have a plan!?" (Tamaki)

The complaint was from the drooping Tamaki. So noisy. I'm thinking to myself here.

And that guy is…… look, after such a loud voice he's locked-on to you.

"Ah, wait time out!" (Tamaki)

Tamaki was tackled by the slime fruitlessly.

Naturally, she was afflicted with the『Deadly Poison』.

However, I was struck with an idea. A way to overcome this.

For that reason, Tamaki was indispensable. I rushed to her while she

was collapsing and drove the slime off of her shoulder.

“Uuu…… Katsuragi…..” (Tamaki)

“Are you alright, Tamaki?” (Daichi)

“The attack wasn’t that strong. However, the poison…..” (Tamaki)

“One moment, now, let me check. Open.” (Daichi)

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Tamaki Yuina Occupation: High-Grade Slave Level: 40

Stamina: 920→908

Magic: 2540

Physical: 1300

Endurance: 1040

Agility: 620

Special Abilities:

『Witch of Freezing』: The effect of the ice magic is increased by one class. However, God-class magic is not increased.

『Chant Omission』: When magic is invoked, the chant may be removed. However, Consumption Magic is one. However, the mana consumption increases by 50%.

Special Status: 『High-Grade Slave』 Owner → Katsuragi Daichi. All attacks against him are sealed. Compulsory submission until release.

『Deadly Poison』: Decreases stamina value by 100 per minute. If the value reaches 0 from this effect, the object dies.

==========

Tamaki only has nine minutes left. It is essential that I do this quickly.

Raising her upper body, I grip her neck and raise her up.

“Hey! You, what are you doing to a sick person!?” (Tamaki)

“I’m going to stop that guy’s movement stopped using you! I expect you to start your suicide tackle. Catch him at that moment! Sound good!?” (Daichi)

“That decision is not good! I’d be no different than a shield!” (Tamaki)

“Give it up! Repent for your actions so far!” (Daichi)

“No! Let go of me!” (Tamaki)

Tamaki struggled desperately to escape my grip. Ah, another troublesome woman!

When I ordered her with an Absolute Command to become a shield, her resistance finally ended.

Now she was concentrating all of her energy on capturing the slime. The change had such a large gap that it was surreal.

“Do you wish to be my shield!?” (Daichi)

“I want to be my master’s shield!” (Tamaki)

“Alright! Then, go! Shield!” (Daichi)

“Yes!” (Tamaki)

Although Tamaki《The Shield》was crying, she answered with a smile and dexterously approached the slime.

As expected, this guy only knows how to counter with a head-butt.

“Shield! Capture it!” (Daichi)

As it hit her stomach, the shield succeeded in capturing the slime with a well-timed embrace.

Raising it above her head, it was made unable to move by using Ice magic on it at point blank range.

“I did it! I did it, master!” (Tamaki)

“That’s right. Then, your reward. Pass it to me and receive your treatment from Shuri.” (Daichi)

“Thank you very much. I won’t forget your kindness. I will surely return it.” (Tamaki)

“Oh. I understand, so go quickly.” (Daichi)

With a rhythm of hopping-like series of light steps, she went towards Shuri.

Incidentally, when she arrived there I released the『Absolute Command』.

Needless to say, she was screaming from embarrassment.

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Because our magic was drained thanks to the Poison Slime we took a small rest before resuming.

“Now for….. The final floor…..” (Tamaki)

Pulverizing the Wight Knights before her into pebbles, Tamaki grumbled.

“Work without the complaining, shield.” (Daichi)

So, I put in a bit of pep talk.

“Don’t call me a shield! How could you treat me like that…. My stamina was at 300 you know!?” (Tamaki)

“Didn’t it turn out fine? Lots of things could happen in three minutes. Like defeating that giant light monster.” (Daichi)

“It’s safe to say you could’ve just waited three minutes.” (Shuri)

“Shuri-chan!? If that happened, I would have died!?” (Tamaki)

“Yui-chan. I’ve told you before to use honorifics for Daichi-sama.” (Shuri)

Shuri splendidly passed the topic of the conversation like a dodgeball.

“U-……. But, I’ve been thinking Shuri-chan. That Katsuragi? That fat, ugly otaku? Shuri-chan is surely better than this guy.” (Tamaki)

“Yui-chan.” (Shuri)

Shuri interrupted Tamaki’s words. The tone of her voice was lower than usual, anyone could tell that she was angry.

“Wh-what?” (Tamaki)

“You don’t know Katsuragi-kun’s kindness. You don’t know Katsuragi-kun’s strength. You don’t know Katsuragi-kun’s suffering. Because you, including me, did not try to get to know Katsuragi-kun.” (Shuri)

“…… That’s….” (Tamaki)

“I have confidence that I love Katsuragi-kun even if his appearance returns to how it was before. Not in compensation, but that these are my honest feelings. I love Katsuragi-kun.” (Shuri)

Shuri twined her arms around me and drew close. Her expression was really happy. Because of that, Tamaki was unable to answer back.

“Therefore, from now on, I don’t permit any insults towards him.” (Shuri)

Shuri’s sharp gaze pierced through Tamaki.

“Absolutely, I do not permit it.” (Shuri)

Shuri declared strongly.

“……” (Tamaki)

Tamaki stopped talking. She remained silent. She seems to have understood just how strong Shuri’s feelings were.

That it exceeded her friendship with Tamaki.

……. I felt ashamed analyzing it like that.

『……』(Everyone)

Everyone fell silent, and the atmosphere became awkward. Though I'm not worried, I wonder if this will affect our teamwork in the upcoming fight against Fontra……

…… At that time, should I use Absolute Command?

"……. Sorry, Shuri-chan. I still don't understand." (Tamaki)

Like that, Tamaki turned back and resumed hunting demons to continue clearing the dungeon.

For the first time, dark clouds hung over our dungeon capture.

The Confrontation

“Finally the 70th Floor huh……” (Daichi)

I mutter with deep emotion. Because【Rigal’s Den】ended on the 60th Floor, this is the first time I’ve been this deep.

The stairs room of this floor was found easily.

Fantra’s magic flowed out. This magic wouldn’t lose to the magic of that crystal.

Feeling its extraordinary concentration, Leadred seemed to be convinced.

With her leading us, we came upon a very modern-looking door.

There were doorknobs on each side of it.

Instructing them here would be the right thing to do.

“…… Hey, Leadred.” (Daichi)

“What is it?” (Leadred)

“Fantra is a tactician right?” (Daichi)

“That is correct.” (Leadred)

“Then, what is with this door?” (Daichi)

“……. Don’t ask me.” (Leadred)

Leadred sat down and seemed worried. She seems strange.

Teaching the enemy your position. This was either really smart or really bad.

In order to not be defeated by the demon Fantra, we began planning.

“….. Though trivial, isn’t it too early? I want to quickly return to the surface.” (Tamaki)

“……. You, even though you were originally a hero…..” (Daichi)

“Shut up. I didn’t think we would do this all at once. Doesn’t Katsuragi just have an excessive amount of power? Because even if he dies he’ll just revive.” (Tamaki)

“…….. Yui-chan.” (Shuri)

“I’m fine watching Shuri-chan for Katsuragi. That way, Katsuragi is relieved.” (Tamaki)

“Yui-chan shouldn’t complain then.” (Shuri)

“That isn’t alright, though. I want Shuri-chan to be safe. I’ll celebrate when you separate from Katsuragi.” (Tamaki)

“….. I want to be with Daichi-sama always. Even if I am weak, I won’t regret it even if I die.” (Shuri)

Looking objectively, Shuri’s resolution was indeed abnormal. If I weren’t the master myself, I would also search for the reasons. Tamaki thought so too.

“…… Are you being threatened into saying that? Shuri-chan, you’ve been strange.” (Tamaki)

“I know. However, it can’t be helped. Nothing will stop me. Therefore, I’ll follow him through thick and thin. Also, didn’t I already say?” (Shuri)

Shuri pointed the dagger she was accustomed to using at Tamaki.

“I won’t forgive anyone speaking badly of Daichi-sama.” (Shuri)

Looking at her gaze, she really means it….. This is bad.

“Shuri” (Daichi)

“Leave it alone for now.” (Leadred)

I take Shuri’s hand and Leadred puts the tip of her sword on

Tamaki's neck, holding her in place.

"Don't you think it would be bad if we were to crack over something like this now that we are a family? Don't worry about what is said to me. If a person isn't looked down on they can't establish superiority over me, so it's fine to leave it." (Daichi)

"But, to do such a thing to Daichi-sama." (Shuri)

"I don't want Shuri to dirty her hands by such a foolish thing." (Daichi)

"……I see……." (Shuri)

Shuri reluctantly withdrew while saying so.

I lost interest in Tamaki. I wouldn't care if she died while fighting, though it would be good if she survives.

If I can use her, that is good.

I use『Absolute Command』to silence her and force her to grasp the doorknob.

"Tamaki, you will begin the preemptive attack. Sound good?" (Daichi)

"……" (Tamaki)

Tamaki selfishly shook her head back and forth with a *KokuKoku*. She readied a Freezing Lance with her right hand. Leadred was on standby to her left. As the door opened, Shuri and I would both charge into the room as the door was opened. Tamaki would then launch the Freezing Lance from where she was. It was that kind of plan.

"……At worst, are you prepared to die?" (Daichi)

The three showed affirmative reactions. When they confirmed, I began the count down.

"Three, two, one—-go!" (Daichi)

With a clank, both doors were pushed and opened towards the inside. We jumped in as we confirmed they were open.

However, contrary to our expectations the room lacked a floor.

“Eh-……?” (Daichi)

“It’s a li-……!” (Shuri)

“Ba-…..!” (Leadred)

“——!?” (Tamaki)

『Uwahhhhhh!?』(Everyone)

There was no place to land, so we shrieked while falling. We could not see the bottom in the darkness.

“Shining!” (Daichi)

I fired the light down. It extended into the deep hole and showed no signs of changing.

“Everyone, join hands!” (Daichi)

We each grabbed the hands of whoever we were next to. To avoid falling apart we form a circular shape.

After falling for some time, we finally see the end.

The ground was littered with the ice crystals we’ve seen until now like a pincushion.

“This is a lie riiiiiight!?” (Shuri)

If we continued like this we would definitely be annihilated. However, the fact that this was ice was a blessing in disguise.

One of my slaves was an expert in Fire magic.

“Leadred!” (Daichi)

Shuri and I let go of her hand and she kicks against the wall to gain some distance from us so that we would not be indirectly harmed.

She began chanting magic that would overcome this situation.

“Sovereign spirits of fire. Burn everything that blocks my path. Leave

nothing behind, reduce all to ash.” (Leadred)

A scorching heat whirled around Leadred’s right arm. An incredible spiral of fire erupted from her and everything was completely burned.

“Pillar of Prominence!” (Leadred) [TN: Kanji for white-hot blazing column.]

The manifested pillar of flames ate through the ice. In an instant, the ice needles vanished.

“Berserk Tempest!” (Daichi)

To get rid of the remaining flames near us, I used the higher class magic『Berserk Tempest』.

With the danger gone, Leadred used her arm to do a forward roll to absorb the impact of the landing.

“Shield! Be pinned under Shuri!” (Daichi)

“Certainly!” (Tamaki) [TN: Oi…. she was supposed to be silenced. (ʘ_ʘ)]

Mimicking Leadred, I succeed in landing. As a result of Tamaki’s protection, Shuri came out uninjured.

The shield’s use for Shuri is satisfactory.

“Sh-Shuri-chan. Are you unhurt? Are you alright?” (Tamaki)

“Y-yeah. Somehow. How about Yui-chan?” (Shuri)

“I used multiple layers of thin ice to lose momentum before landing so I’m alright. Though I’m relieved Shuri-chan isn’t hurt…..” (Tamaki)

Tamaki expressed a truly happy smile.

She was lying. No ice could prevent that sort of impact from falling that far. When she landed, I saw her grimace in pain.

Shuri was also aware of it. Therefore, she stretched her hands out to Tamaki to help her stand.

I noticed that I was envying her.

In that case, maybe I put off discarding Tamaki because I wanted to see such a moment.

I've also wished for a friend of the same sex. Of course, Samejima and the other classmates were impossible.

Even though Leadred was a woman she was filling that spot.

"…….. I had a feeling that helping you all would have been considerably impolite….. Was it my imagination?" (Fantra)

"It was your imagination. Though, hey. The 'criminal who made this trap'-san makes his appearance." (Daichi)

Just like that, with globes of light gently radiating light from the palm of his hand, the wide space brightened immediately and reflected off the crystals.

There was a man sitting with his legs crossed on a splendid throne in the interior.

Wavy golden hair. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that his appearance his features were sculpted.

However, there was one flaw.

There was no splendor in his eyes. Instead, they were impure.

I felt no life from them. This fellow looked dead while being alive.

It seemed like a contradiction but I was confident. Because those eyes were familiar. Since coming to this world I've seen these dead eyes often.

"Welcome, heroes. I serve as this dungeon's guardian under Messiah as her demon army's Chief of Staff—Fantra Angas." (Fantra)

Following his light indroduction, Fantra Angas gave a smile and a chill ran through me.

"I believe I have to kill you all now——you have my regards."

(Fantra)

Someone Loved, Someone Unloved, Someone Who Loves

Story 2-14『Someone Loved, Someone Unloved, Someone Who Loves』

I smiled fearlessly so that Fantra would not see me shaking from his sudden declaration of war.

"…… Oi oi. Being that cruel from the start. Let's get along." (Daichi)

"Saying something like that is an amusing joke, Hero. Did you really think that? With your abilities, you aren't worth serving." (Fantra)

"Even without fighting, you say something like that." (Daichi)

"It's fine to say. Well, I've seen all of your fights." (Fantra)

Fantra picked up the crystal that was laying horizontally in a cup next to the throne, showing it to us.

"Do you all know why the dungeon was lined with this crystal?" (Fantra)

"…… To drive us mad?" (Daichi)

"Nonsense. Its purpose is to observe adventurers. I slowly give the crystal some of my magic. And, everything infused with my magic becomes my eyes, my hands, and my feet. It becomes my servant." (Fantra)

Fantra continued talking proudly.

"Because of that I was able to receive and appreciate your fights on each floor. Though Leadred being here surprised me….. Your battles were beautifully unintelligent." (Fantra)

Fantra jeered at us. He scornfully laughed with a *Foon* sound.

If I got mad I would fight and die like an idiot. I was getting annoyed.

“Beauty has nothing to do with fighting though?” (Daichi)

“It does. Though possible, a person that possesses a surplus of ability can’t just go to defeat his enemy and kill them. Something like tying with you would be out of the question. I have plans for every situation to some extent, you see.” (Fantra)

Finishing with all he wanted to say, Fantra stood up at last.

“Therefore, I will teach you. The viewpoint of a person of war.” (Fantra)

He thrust his right hand out. What kind of attack will he begin with, we begin taking this into consideration and prepare for the various possibilities.

“Bloom—-Ice Flower” (Fantra)

He snapped his fingers. The crystals at his feet cracked and from the fissures a flower that wore an air of absolute zero bloomed. It stole the heat.

“””Fireball! “””” (Daichi, Tamaki, Shuri, Leadred)

All four judged that the situation was dangerous and shot a fireball at their own feet, slightly escaping the restraints.

Though we’d probably be burned, it was much more preferable to being imprisoned in ice.

“You judged the situation and used Fire magic without hesitation. To the extent that you would injure yourselves, I would have expected the fear of pain to stop you from doing so.” (Fantra)

“This way is better than dying.” (Daichi)

“Foolish. You will die without pain encased in ice.” (Fantra)

“Sorry, but this isn’t that place I’m scheduled to die!” (Daichi)

I severed my feet with a swing of my sword and kicked off the ground keeping a low profile. Fantra dodged by jumping. However,

Leadred had broken into a run with me. Her longsword swung full speed at Fantra to reap his consciousness.

His eyes were fixed on my slashing attack. Leadred was in his blind spot.

The attack is unavoidable!

“Multi-Guard!” (Fantra) [TN: Kanji for Multiple Layers of Ice]

Countering my expectations, the shield of ice prevented Leadred’s surprise attack. Fantra was superior in this exchange and never broke his composure.

However, we are not two people. We are four.

Tamaki who had been hiding behind Leadred and Shuri who took a long path around when Fantra jumped to dodge each invoked magic.

“Freezing Lance!” (Tamaki)

“Cyclone!” (Shuri)

The speed, as well as power I have nothing to complain about. Both of the girls displayed an equally perfect performance.

However, neither reached him.

“Therefore, because of your skillful display! Ice Stream” (Fantra)

Snap, Snap

Their magic was flung away and smashed into the crystals in another direction, a large amount of ice began to overflow and swallow their magic.

It followed the magic back to them freezing everything along the way.

“Shuri!” (Daichi)

I jumped at her and we both rolled horizontally over the floor to escape.

Around the same time an explosive sound echoed through the air.

Though slightly obscured by steam, there was the form of a demon fighting back with balls of flame.

Exposing the ice to high temperatures, it sublimated.

Skillfully overdoing it, Leadred landed near us.

“Are there no injuries?” (Leadred)

“Light scratches. Nothing that would be an obstacle in combat. Apart from that I need you to listen…. Shuri and Tamaki, I want you to destroy the crystal. During that time, Leadred and I will distract that creepy guy.” (Daichi)

Realizing the importance the crystal’s offense and defense was to the fight the two immediately took action.

So, Leadred and I did the same.

“Though it’ll be hard for Leadred, bare this burden.” (Daichi) [TN: Can’t figure out. Halp.「リードレッドには悪いけど、俺と外れ役を担ってもらうぞ」]

“Don’t worry. Besides, I’ve wanted to fight him. This is just a good chance.” (Leadred)

She was indeed having fun and laughing vibrantly. This fellow really does enjoy fighting.

“I appreciate you saying that.” (Daichi)

Informing her of my gratitude, I face back forward. As usual, Fantra displayed a sad face, sighing.

“Are you foolish? Saying that? The crystal is also my eyes. Even if you start a diversified attack, I can see through it.” (Fantra)

“There’s no reason to believe what you are saying.” (Daichi)

“Though, with this will you understand? After all this crystal is also a part of my body.” (Fantra)

“Fortunately, if this crystal disappears your war potential will also lower drastically.” (Daichi)

“I see, and those girls are to concentrate only on breaking the crystal?” (Fantra)

He threw a sidelong glance at Shuri’s group.

Of course, I have no reason to let him to go over there.

Leadred shot an Ogre Flame. Fantra threw a ball of ice in response.

“Your opponents are us you know?” (Daichi)

“Leadred……. Why a woman like you would fall and group with a hero, it is a mystery. Though it would be unexpected….. Were you defeated?” (Fantra)

“Ah. Your beloved strategies will be defeated. The hero’s cooperation exceeded my expectations…… Hey, Fantra. I believe this existence will become one that will guide us. How about it? Can’t we group together?” (Leadred)

“You are well aware of my character, Leadred. Either he loses or defeats me and gains everything.” (Fantra)

“Well, that response was expected. Then, how about we start?” (Leadred)

Leadred moved her saliva patterned sword’s pommel vertical to the ground in advance. She dropped her waist a little, moving her right heel back.

I also pointed my sword to him so that a line could extend out and intersect with his throat.

Responding to us, he produced an ice sword and just like the royal palace swordsmen he drew his right arm close and put his right leg out, taking a half body stance. The posture looks like fencing.

“”””……””” (Daichi, Fantra, Leadred)

We faced him. Silence permeated the air. The first to break the stillness of the water’s surface——.

“Quick!” (Leadred)

—— Was Leadred.

Fantra retreated from the shockwave caused by her sword's downward swing. In order to not give him a chance to regain his posture I changed my grip to an underhand grip.

A red line appeared aimed towards Fantra's body.

"Line Drive!" (Daichi)

"Multi-Guard!" (Fantra) [TN: Kanji for Multiple Walls of Ice]

The ice wall was crushed into pieces. I had to take care of pieces that were scattered.

Closing the distance in a step, I struck. Fantra took a risk and crouched with a leg sweep.

I acted as though I fell for it and stabbed him with my sword. Fantra took the thrust.

"Yo…. o-!?" (Daichi)

I, who loosened my tension because the attack was sure to hit, was thrown overhead. Turning around mid-air, I landed on my feet was saw an icy knife thrown towards me.

"Ku-! Wind Slice!" (Daichi)

With my frantic blade of wind, I suppressed it and was knocked sideways with a light cut on my cheek.

"Oraa!" (Daichi)

"Foon!" (Fantra) [TL: This dude's sounds make me lol]

Leadred and I performed a pincer attack. Fantra caught her longsword between his fingers. An ice wall appeared, and Wind Slice was used in response.

"I didn't hear a chant!" (Daichi) ?

"Sword Freeze!" (Fantra)

I followed suit and attacked just after. He stopped my attack by

creating another ice sword with his empty hand.

The moment our swords met, an unpleasant *Paki* sound was heard. Ice corroded my sword.

“Seiya-!” (Daichi)

Fantra jumped and spun like a spinning top. Though I tried to counter him, the centrifugal force joined his attack and broke my abdomen.

I threw the handle of my broken sword in response. It missed.

Leadred repeated a backhand spring away, while I took a step backwards to gain some distance.

“Tch…. Fighting against him is as unpleasant as usual….” (Leadred)

“Ah…. It kinda seems there’s too much of a difference in our strength right?” (Daichi)

I rock my shoulder and breathe, even Leadred’s brow is sweating.

Nevertheless, Fantra’s breathing hasn’t increased at all. No sweat, and he still has on that faintly cold smile. Furthermore there is a problem……

The hole from the part that I pierced is empty. However, there is no red liquid that should have been coming out from there.

Like this, is he an undead……?

“Uuu~n, you still have some ways to go. Even if I assume you can’t use all of your power because Leadred is in the room, for a hero cooperating with her to only be able to wound me ….. It’s hard to express how disappointed I am.” (Fantra)

The sole wound from a moment ago, the light from the crystal erased it.

“Are you coming to grasp the situation you are in now?” (Fantra) [TL: Think I missed something of what he’s trying to say here.「もう少し状況を把握して動いたらどうだい？」]

“You made us come to you after ensnaring your territory with traps.”

(Daichi)

He was actually able to absorb the crystal. There was almost no crystal left in our vicinity.

Shuri's group consisted of half of us and was working hard to decrease its amount.

Though I didn't understand the mechanism of his nonexistent chanting, it wasn't impossible to read the cause, just hard.

The longer this was prolonged, the more unfavorable this guy would become. The progress of battle would decline.

With these four, it was possible to fight. To kill.

I breathed in heavily, and vomited.

After this is the crucial moment.

"Prepare for me to kill you and become my slave." (Daichi)

As I said so, my concentration improved again. I took position in an area that had no crystal.

The present conditions were perfect.

——Nevertheless, Fantra looked at us and begins to laugh loudly.

"Enslave me? It is impossible! Because, you still have not understood!" (Fantra)

Pachin

The sound of Fantra's fingers snapping remained in my ear eerily.

"—When did I say that I was only able to invoke magic from unused crystals?" (Fantra)

I simultaneously understood the meaning of his words with the ice spear piercing me through the chest.

"…….. Goho-!?" (Daichi)

Blood began to spill from my mouth. I began to collapse but endured

it, though only remained on one knee.

Though, this is dangerous. I know because I've experienced this many times. The pain of death.

My head was filled with intense pain. No blood streamed from the wound. The spear emanated cold air that froze my body.

"….. Aaa!" (Daichi)

Ignoring the pain from the attack by shutting my teeth by force, I pulled out the ice spear. As a blessing in disguise the wound was already frozen, so it didn't hurt as much.

"Hero-sa——gu-!" (Leadred)

Leadred tried to jump over but fell to the floor when a chain of ice started entangling around her feet and killed her momentum. With the chain twining around her as it was, she was unable to move.

"Shit, this ice! Oni—" (Leadred)

"Freeze" (Fantra)

"————!?" (Leadred)

In order to stop Leadred's magic chant, her mouth was frozen.

"Leadred. Be quiet and sit still for a little while. I also don't want to kill a comrade…… now then." (Fantra)

"Aga……!" (Daichi)

"I will not tolerate you, hero." (Fantra)

I was pulled up by the hair and subsequently hit. This was repeated over and over again.

Nose broke. Teeth broke. Cheek caved in. Constant pain until all feeling was lost. Only my right eye was barely functioning.

Fantra's face was distorted like a sadist. A face like Samejima's. A criminal who gets pleasure from hurting another person.

"…… I am weak…. huh?" (Daichi)

“That is so. However, the most inexcusable thing….. Messiah fell in love with you!” (Fantra) [TL: o.0]

His anger surged again, I was thrown and he trampled on my wound.

“Uwahhh!?” (Daichi)

The ice that closed the wound cracked and once again the pain came back. Even hearing my screams this guy’s anger is not calmed at all.

“To receive Messiah-sama’s affection to this degree and given that power, someone of my greatness and as one who has received the goddesses’ affection will not permit it!” (Fantra)

It’s painful. Stop it. Stop it….!

“You stole it! I forever have and always will bequeath my heart to her!” (Fantra)

Don’t you know? The one who gave me power is Claria. Not the demon.

“Therefore, I am proving that I am stronger than you by defeating you here. Then, she’ll notice me too! You are disillusioned to think you can defeat me, I am the one who is loved!!” (Fantra)

I had neither a response nor the energy to do so. Preferably he kills me soon. And then, I’ll kill him after strengthening.

After stepping on me and becoming satisfied, Fantra moved his foot away while breathing roughly.

“Be at ease. I’ll put you in order after you taste the same pain as me.” (Fantra)

I had a bad feeling from his remark. It became reality.

“First of all, that important girl over there, I’ll kill that important girl!” (Fantra)

Fantra removed what blocked line of sight between Shuri and me, reddened with my own blood, with his hand.

“You….. How dare you do that to Katsuragi-kun!!” (Shuri)

She piled her hands on top of each other, projecting them out in front of her.

“Ah, that won’t help! Shuri-chan!” (Tamaki)

“Oh? Going to challenge me with magic? Interesting.” (Fantra)

Boiling with anger, she shakes off the composed Tamaki and begins to recite magic. I don’t know when she memorized it, the chant for the magic that I am skilled in.

“Emperor of wind. Thou, hew down the one who obstructs this one’s noble path!” (Shuri)

“Emperor of ice. Thou, freeze the one who obstructs this one’s noble path!” (Fantra)

Stop it, Shuri. Run away. Don’t assault him directly, run away. Today, you can’t win.

However, absolute command cannot be used. My intentions don’t reach her.

“Blow, Storm King of Military Rule, establish here. Turn everything to dust, and return all to the Earth!” (Shuri)

Move. Move it. Scrape just a little more strength together. You only have to move even a little. Therefore, move. Please, move.

“Berserk Tempest!!” (Shuri)

“Blizzard Prison!” (Fantra)

The emperor-class magics manifested at almost the same time and crashed into each other.

When magic of the same class collides with each other, what decides the victor?

The answer is easy. Strength.

“Ku-!” (Shuri)

According to the law, Shuri is pushed. At this rate, she will become victim to that ice.

Such a thing won't do.

"Wiiiiiind!!" (Daichi)

The word that was finally spoken became a trigger, the wind supported my body so that it wouldn't fall. Moreover, my speed was increased heading to where she was.

However, it's still not in time.

Shuri is done for.

In addition, Heaven-Style Wind was added.

Be in time, be in time, be in time!

I felt in a hurry. Only a mere few seconds after invoking the magic felt like hours.

Shuri was in a steadily worsening situation.

—-This time, I had forgotten.

"Shuri-chan!!" (Tamaki)

There was one more person who thought of her as important.

Tamaki jumped to Shuri and pushed her out of the way.

Tamaki was now in the same spot she had been in.

Shuri went out of range of that guy's magic. Her safety was guaranteed.

I didn't need to go there any more.

……. However.

"Rejected." (Daichi)

"Kya-" (Tamaki)

I didn't release the magic, and thrust Tamaki away to Shuri.

“Ka-Katsuragi…..!?” (Tamaki)

Tamaki looked at me with eyes of disbelief.

“Don’t misunderstand. It is my duty to help Shuri.” (Daichi)

I wanted to say that, I am satisfied.

That guy’s magic rained down.

“Triple Guard!” (——)

I heard someone’s voice recite magic, my view was dyed pure white.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

“Rejected.” (Daichi)

“Kya-“ (Tamaki)

Even though it would defend Shuri, I dashed out recklessly without thinking about anything.

Shuri would be pushed, I would be the magic’s victim.

Nevertheless, Katsuragi is there.

“Ka-Katsuragi…..!?” (Tamaki)

When that man glanced at me, he said.

“Don’t misunderstand. It is my duty to help Shuri.” (Daichi)

Why did you come to help? Why does Shuri follow this man?

For an instant, I saw why.

I had thought that Shuri was compulsed to interact with this guy. Since this situation seemed to be like one of Katsuragi’s favorite anime, because Shuri was following this man to the point of delirium.

However, Katsuragi was enduring the pain, despite the hole in his chest, he came to defend Shuri though he was already collapsing.

I saw no hesitation from him.

I was coming to help Shuri-chan without even reflecting on his death.

Until the ice magic dissolves, to the extent that the pain is not felt until destroyed, it is not possible to die.

In other words, Katsuragi's ability would not activate.

Katsuragi, to that extent——he loves Shuri so much.

While thinking so, I naturally opened my mouth.

"Triple Guard!" (Tamaki)

The layers of the soul-class ice magic was placed over Katsuragi's upper body. Though I wanted to defend his whole body, I know that my magic would not stand a chance. Therefore, the area was shrank to raise its strength.

So long as Katsuragi can safely commit suicide, 『Revenge of the Resented』can be invoked.

Fantra's magic covered Katsuragi and ran out. The places that were covered by my triple ice layers were safe.

"Katsuragi!" (Tamaki)

I ran up to Katsuragi. As for the lower half of his body, it was mortifyingly frozen.

"Are you alright, Katsuragi!?" (Tamaki)

"…. If you are worrying about me some sort of natural disaster must have happened….." (Daichi)

"Sh-shut up! ….. I was wrong!" (Tamaki)

Katsuragi's face looked confused. As though he was seeing a rare animal.

"…… You're serious, did you hit your head?" (Daichi)

"Making such a joke in this situation!? You can heal like you did before! It's difficult to say something like this but, could you die?" (Tamaki)

“No, my arms were frozen. It’s impossible.” (Daichi)

“Then, I’ll kill you.” (Tamaki)

“A senior slave cannot attack the master.” (Daichi)

“Oh, come on! In that case, your pouch, I’ll look through it!” (Tamaki)

I looked through Katsuragi’s pouch. A potion….. the yanu leaf wrapped in 3 pieces of cloth, a map. Provisions….

It’s no good. No fruit of Freya can cure the frozen condition!

While searching for something, Katsuragi’s freezing continued.

“Katsuragi! Do you not have anything!?” (Tamaki)

“…….. Wait. Here ……” (Daichi)

Katsuragi suddenly gripped my shoulders and brought his face to my here. Then, he murmured something into my ear.

“——!?” (Tamaki)

“Sh-Shuri-chan, bring her…..” (Tamaki)

“This isn’t this time for that, there is a possibility that he will target Shuri. For Shuri’s sake it is more convenient like this.” (Daichi)

“B-but I also… It’s my first time….” (Tamaki)

“Is that something you should say in this situation?” (Daichi)

“D-do you think so?” (Tamaki)

“Yeah.” (Daichi)

Katsuragi was determined. I also understand why this is necessary.

The preparation from now must be done immediately.

“If it’s unpleasant, I’ll will use absolute command.” (Daichi)

“I-it’s different! A-at least, my timing….” (Tamaki)

“Though it’s unfortunate, there is no time to have hesitation.” (Daichi)

“…. I understand! I know!” (Tamaki)

I put my lips on Katsuragi’s and he entrusted his energy to me. I didn’t think that Katsuragi would be forceful, but he violated my mouth with his tongue without reservation.

Th-this guy….!

However, it was strange to find that I didn’t find it that unpleasant.

“Puha……” (Tamaki)

The long kiss ended, and I was liberated.

“I entrust it all to you. I’ll gamble it on your friendship with Shuri.” (Daichi)

Friendship. These kinds of things were impossible to the Katsuragi that entered high school.

I’m sure that he has also long forgotten those things, as he was able to entrust his, Leadred’s and Shuri’s fate to the person who he trusted the least.

Then, a response was necessary.

Because I will not allow my friendship with Shuri to lose to anyone.

“Leave it to me. My friendship with Shuri is one hundred times as strong as yours. Without fail —— I will win.” (Tamaki)

Hearing my declaration full of overflowing confidence, Katsuragi smiled.

And so he went to sleep in the ice.

Demon Killing

“Ah…….” (Shuri)

When I got up, Katsuragi-kun and Yui-chan were kissing.

Suddenly, when I heard the screams of sorrow, I had forgotten myself and shot a Berserk Tempest at Fantra.

My enemy also invoked ice emperor-class magic. I lacked composure this time. I had forgotten that it was deplorable to clash the same class of magic against each other.

Naturally, my magic lost when it collided with『Ice Jail Prison』. However, it was still good.

It was my mistake. It would have been my responsibility even if I died. I believed that Katsuragi-kun would surely win.

However, I was blown out of the way. By my close friend, Yui-chan.

She talked to me for a long time when we were on the road, apologizing and worrying. I returned it with a cold behavior.

Despite all that, she tried to protect me with her body. Perhaps, so that day would not be repeated….

However, it was still too early to be surprised. There was a person who pushed Yuina outside of range as well.

Katsuragi-kun.

He is a gentle person. A person with a very, very warm heart. A person who makes others happy.

He saved me. Back then, he didn’t give up, even though the number of cruel things I did to him weren’t few.

He is such a person. Yuina-chan might not have been able to leave him alone. He is an important existence that can lavish everyone with

his kindness.

There was a pain in my chest.

And now, my fears became reality.

Katsuragi French kissed Yui-chan. She didn't show an unpleasant reaction, and responded.

His body abruptly lost strength.

Katsuragi-kun said something to Yui-chan. Katsuragi-kun smiled back when Yui-chan answered.

And then, he was confined in ice.

"….. Ah…… ah….." (Shuri)

What did Katsuragi-kun say? Yui-chan must have come to like him.

No, after disliking him to that extent it is impossible for something like that.

There's only one way to make sure.

From his mouth, from Katsuragi's mouth, I want to hear it.

I want him to say『It's different』.

I want him to tell me『I like only Shuri』.

I want him to embrace me.『Mine』

To do that, for that reason.

"……. Have to kill." (Shuri)

That guy, I have to kill the man who is laughing loudly at Katsuragi-kun being covered in ice.

I slowly, unsteadily get up.

My thoughts are scrambled.

Sloppy. They are chaotic.

Then, in that case, I must throw them away.

I only need to think of killing him now. So, I do just that. As long as Katsurag-kun lives, it is fine.

“Demon Killing, invoke.” (Shuri) [TN: Reminder for all, this is her limit release ability that doubles her stats for a limited time.]

My body that seemed to be severely weighted down like lead became light.

I don’t have time. I have to end it within five minutes.

“Oya? You still wish to fight? With me even. Do you not understand the difference in our strength from the magic contest a moment ago?” (Fantra)

“If it isn’t magic, I will win.” (Shuri)

If magic is a threat, it is fine to just not let it be used. The me right now can do such a thing.

“You are foolish! To try such a thing!” (Fantra)

“I won’t know unless I try. Well, let’s start.” (Shuri)

I cut the air several times with my dagger….. Yeah, fast.

“I’m willing to overlook this you know? Right now, I feel terrific. Moreover you and I have both been thrown away. I don’t have a hobby in beating up brokenhearted women.” (Fantra)

“….. Shut up. I haven’t been thrown away. That was necessary.” (Shuri)

Yeah. Katsuragi will do anything that is necessary. I won’t hesitate because I must kill this person. I trust Yui-chan has come up with a strategy to overcome this situation.

I move in rhythmic light steps with a *TonTon*. I close my eyes and concentrate on my awareness.

“….. Oh, this might be good. Then become nourishment for my magic!” (Fantra)

Fantra snapped his fingers.

At that time, I——accelerated.

Just a little, it didn't even take a second.

Faster than the eye can see, I ran around behind Fantra.

"…… Eh?" (Fantra)

Fantra hadn't noticed yet. I pulled my arm behind my back.

"Here." (Shuri)

"Eh……!?" (Fantra)

My fist exploded in his face. Fresh blood erupted at the moment of impact.

"……!" (Fantra)

He stepped back unsteadily after losing his eyesight and hearing, and with a *Pachin* snapped his fingers.

A mass of light concentrated around his face, restoring it.

"Y-you! What in the world are you!?" (Fantra)

I hit him hard in the face again. However, this time there was a layer of ice to act as a cushion in response.

Distancing from him would be dangerous.

I drew closer to a dagger's distance from him and engaged in physical combat.

"Yaa!" (Shuri)

"Multiple Ice Wall! Multi-Guarder!" (Fantra)

When he understood that it was not possible to prevent me with a layer of ice, he instantly switched to an ice wall. I predicted this.

I took off rotating in the air and launched into an axe kick. Fantra was unable to conceal his surprise at the abrupt change of course.

“Gu-……!” (Fantra)

He crossed his arms above him to receive the attack and took it. Fantra’s guard was broken by the ballistic shock, as easily as snapping pond weeds.

“Aaaahhh!?” (Fantra)

Fantra glared at me while screaming from intense pain.

“You, how dare you! Ice—“ (Fantra)

“No you don’t!” (Shuri)

He flew to the wall from a kick before his chant was completed. A large crater is made on the wall, and he falls feebly without the power to get up.

I cannot let this chance go. Before Fantra has a chance to regenerate, I cut off his arms.

I did not slow the attacks with my hand.

Gripping his neck, I throw him at the wall. I hit him with a right roundhouse kick followed by a right straight. I used the roundhouse kick because it has the highest destructive power before driving him in with the straight.

His head hanged loosely, and was no longer breathing.

“Because of you, Katsuragi-kun is…..” (Shuri)

I aimed by dagger at his heart and tore at him with all of my strength. Altering its position to an underhanded grip, I swung at him.

Vertically, diagonally, sideways.

I cut him into pieces. Finely, so that he would never appear in front of us again.

He became a lump of meat.

I finally stopped cutting him with my dagger when I became nauseated. Nothing left of the remnants before me looked human.

“Haa……. haa…… haa…..” (Shuri)

I killed him.

His skull was crush, his heart split, his body sundered. He is unable to make use of his fingers to activate the crystals, nor capable of chanting magic.

I did it. With this Katsuragi will return!

I was wrapped in a sense of accomplishment and glanced in his direction expecting that.

However, Katsuragi-kun was still in the ice.

“….. Eh, why……?” (Shuri)

Fantra was defeated. He was deprived of life by my hands.

Yet…. Why is Katsuragi not free!?

Was the requirement different!? Does Fantra have to cancel the magic……? Or is there another cause?

“Shuri-chan! Behind you!” (Tamaki)

Yui-chan’s voice brought me out of my thoughts and returned me to reality.

Turning around, I saw Fantra’s regeneration almost completed and was approaching me with sword in hand. I tried to avoid him by stepping back—-suddenly, my body received many times the effect of gravity, and was only able to take a single step.

Why…… This timing, the effects from Demon Killing ended……

My chest was pierced and I collapsed on the spot.

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AUTHOR’S COMMENT

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By the way, here is Shuri’s status during this fight:

＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝

Hamakaze Juri　Occupation: Slave　Level: 72

Stamina：3170→2260→4068→8136

Magic：3640→2640→4752→9504

Physical：2830→5094→10188

Endurance：2170→3906→7812

Agility：1690→3042→6084

＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝

※『Loyalty』『Demon killing』Simultaneous activation.

Revival

Bad. This is very bad.

My entire body was covered with cold sweat.

Shuri-chan was done. She was pierced through the back. I want to immediately dash to where she is.

However, I need to be calm. If I am defeated here, we all really will be annihilated.

Originally I was going to have Shuri-chan break Leadred-san's chains and make it a 3:1 fight.

However, Shuri has be struck down. Leadred-san has been restricted by chains that are physically impossible for me to destroy.

She was turning pale after body temperature was being sapped. Breathing must also be difficult. I think Leadred-san's strength is what is keeping her alive.

In other words, I have no choice but to do everything alone.

"Ahahahahaha! It is regrettable, you! It was a precaution I took, just in case. I'm revived automatically if I lose consciousness one time in this room. In exchange, all of the crystals' magic has been exhausted." (Fantra)

Fantra raised his foot and tramped on Shuri's head.

"It was painful you know? My whole body being hacked into pieces." (Fantra)

He ground her head into the ground.

It's no good. I will definitely pay for it. If I attack in a rage it will be The End.

I clutched my fists and dug in my fingernails in to endure it.

“I did not expect you to be able to move like that. I’ll make you my slave and put you in your place after I kill the hero…… Well.” (Fantra)

Both of his eyes turned to me.

“Open” (Tamaki)

Status confirmed. Remaining magic…… 1380. I shouldn’t use chant omission. I’ll use everything I have to escape.

I looked at my watch. Shuri earned about six minutes. Then, I have to double that to live.

Until then, I’ll attract his attention.

“You. That was unexpected a little while ago.” (Fantra)

“What?” (Tamaki)

Do not let him sense my fear. I must keep my confident atmosphere.

I must hide my area of expertise and put on airs and use my surroundings to survive.

I need to bluff……!

“The hero surely likes that girl…. But his favorite was not her!” (Tamaki)

“You are misunderstanding it…… he likes her. And I like him.” (Tamaki)

“Misunderstand? Still, so long as I was looking he only put his hand out for this girl. Rather, I remember you suffering abuse.” (Fantra)

“T-that is just the peculiar way Katsuragi displays his love! Because I have a body that feels pleasure from being beaten!” (Tamaki)

……. What am I saying about myself, I can’t believe this. Fantra laughed in derision.

“That so, that so? You are one of those so-called perverts then huh.” (Fantra)

“Y-yeah! I’m sinful!” (Tamaki)

I was desperate. Even if I was considered a pervert, it was fine. I’ll do whatever I need to disguise myself.

This compensation was cheap when compared with my life.

“Excuse me, but you should also have someone you love like crazy… Messiah-sama… Isn’t it? That woman, in what way does she love you?”

There’s a basis for conversation. A topic that my opponent is interested in.

He completely changed earlier and gave off an envy of Katsuragi. He’s sure to bite…!

“…… I see. You were stalling for time until he dies?” (Fantra)

Why, how did he collect himself at such a time….!?

“S-such a thing isn’t true. I was purely interested.” (Tamaki)

“Your lie is no good. Your voice is off. You can’t hide how you are shaking.” (Fantra)

U-……. I’m at a loss for words. Fantra started to speak proudly.

“It was disappointing, but inviting you all here did excite me. I defeated the hero. The person who was receiving Messiah-sama’s affection is gone. Now her affection will pour down upon me!” (Fantra)

Oh, god…… he was in a pose similar to a nun’s.

“Therefore, to the me now anything you do is useless. Give it up.” (Fantra)

“……. It’s different. I-“ (Tamaki)

“Tenacious.” (Fantra)

A sword of ice was shot at my feet. I immediately understood that he declared his intentions.

“Leadred can’t move. This slave girl will die, and the hero cannot die while in that ice.” (Fantra)

Fantra snaps his fingers continuously, *Pachi* *Pachi* *Pachin*.

With a sword of ice in his right hand, an ice shield and icy stones appeared to surround him.

“Desperation. You, the weakest of these four, are a trifling matter at most!” (Fantra)

Fantra took one step, and again took another step shortening the gap between us. I match him and retreat.

“…… Now, how many minutes can you survive?” (Fantra)

His words signal the start of the fight.

“Then. To start, here.” (Fantra)

The icy stones that were floating in the air were fired simultaneously. It was if rain was pouring.

“Triple Guard” (Tamaki)

I put three layers of ice at intervals to jump from one to the other like stairs. When I reached the last one, where I was on the floor was decimated.

“Strong as usual…..!” (Tamaki)

“Hey! Is it safe to look away from me!?” (Fantra)

“I know, shut up!” (Tamaki)

A second volley of the icy stones were shot. Though I jumped down this time to evade, he didn’t overlook it.

“Soora!” (Fantra)

Fantra came to close quarters combat.

I have no way to manipulate my body in the air like Katsuragi can.

Therefore, I can do nothing but confront him head on.

“Freezing Lance” (Tamaki)

I defend against the sword with a spear made of the same thing.

“You were also a user of the same ice magic!” (Fantra)

“I was holding back!” (Tamaki)

Fantra’s body was kicked back from the colliding powers, and lands after a single rotation. I turned my body, and ran with all my strength.

“……..Hmph. Well, it’s fine. You’ll die anyways. I keep you company in a game of tag.” (Fantra)

One-by-one, Fantra fired his icy stones rapidly. At times I used the Threefold Ice Layer to defend, others by rotating the lance centered on my wrist to deflect them. Even then it couldn’t be helped that I was hit by some dead-on.

“Freeze!” (Tamaki)

I aimed at the floor under Fantra’s feet to get him to slip. However, he was able to run unimpeded, with composure as though he wasn’t affected by it at all.

“Oioi, child’s play?” (Fantra)

Fantra lowered his foot on purpose and divided the film of ice. Seeing the situation, I chuckle.

This trap was improvised to camouflage something. Shuri-chan’s wound was frozen.

Shuri is not dead, she has only fainted from the aftereffects of『Demon Killing』. That is how I interpret her falling after being attacked from behind from that guy.

It will be bad if she gets too cold, but it should be no problem if it only for a short time.

I just need to imitate this a bit longer.

If I pour magic into her, Shuri-chan should be able to use healing

magic to repair the hole.

Confirming that the wound is safely closed with ice, emergency treatment was completed and I attracted his attention.

I stopped trying to escape.

“Oya? Are we done playing tag?” (Fantra)

“Yes. Because you will be defeated where you stand.” (Tamaki)

“Heh….. That was a merry jest, you.” (Fantra)

Fantra spread out his palms.

“Its fine, try it. I’ll wait for you to cast your magic.” (Fantra)

“Thank you very much for your kindness. As I am weak, I’ll accept your kindness.” (Tamaki)

I threw out an obstructive Freezing Lance. He broke it easily.

“……..I never would have thought, this was your trump card?” (Fantra)

“It was just a jest. Next is the real thing.” (Tamaki)

I placed my hands together in front of me and began the chant.

“Spirits of ice, become that shield that defends me. Threefold Ice Layer.” (Tamaki) [TN: This author is very inconsistent with his spells names.]

Three layers of shields appear in front of my palms.

“Fu……. Consolidating your defenses? Those three ice layers won’t be able to defend against my attack.” (Fantra)

“I wonder about that? By all means go for it. Or does the strongest ice magician wish to run away in fear?” (Tamaki)

“……. I won’t be fooled by provocation.” (Fantra)

“Oh, unfortunate. Then, how about this? Threefold Ice Layer.” (Tamaki)

Three more shields appear ahead of the others.

“Threefold Ice Layer. Threefold Ice Layer. Threefold Ice Layer. Threefold Ice Layer. Threefold Ice Layer. Threefold Ice Layer. Threefold Ice Layer. Threefold Ice Layer. Threefold Ice Layer.” (Tamaki)

Thirty shields of ice were prepared. I filled the area between Fantra and I up to its capacity with them.

Already, I’m at the limit of my magic. I feel dizzy. But, I won’t give in.

I pulled my arm in until my hand reached my chest.

“——Shields aren’t used only in defense.” (Tamaki)

I pushed them out with my other palm in a straight thrust.

The thirty layers of ice crash into Fantra at the same time, pushing him into the wall with great force.

“Gu-……! However, with this level…… Freeze Gun!” (Fantra)

Directly from Fantra’s hand, a bullet of ice was shot at the wall. However, it remained as it only broke the first two layers.

“What!?” (Fantra)

Fantra expressed his astonishment.

The conversation from before was foreshadowing this. I purposely used recognizable provocation. And as he knows the rank of the Threefold Ice Layer, I chanted everything.

I predicted that Fantra would definitely use soul-class magic.

And this was the point. That guy wins with magic of the same class. This fact cannot be changed and is providence of the world. Therefore, Fantra would also use soul-class.

However, he doesn’t know. I have the『Witch of Freezing』special ability.

“Goooooooooooo!” (Tamaki)

The surging group of ice layers nailed Fantra to the wall. Like this, it

was crushing him, then movement stopped.

“Oooooh!” (Fantra)

Fantra, just like me, was pushing on the high class layers.

“Ku-…….!” (Tamaki)

“Ha-……!” (Fantra)

We directly opposed each other. The ice layers didn’t budge at all. I exhausted myself earlier.

“Aaaaah!” (Tamaki)

He got his revenge on me. I was thrown at the wall, and I feebly fell down.

However, I overflowed with satisfaction. I saw my wristwatch. As expected, the target time was reached.

With this, I fulfilled my role.

“That was a good plan. You put me into a bitter situation.” (Fantra)

Fantra drew close to Katsuragi who was still covered in ice.

“But you and the other girl were the highlights. This guy was a letdown. It would have been impossible anyway, to become the hero of a demon.” (Fantra)

“….. Is that so? Even though those two got along fine. Hey…… for example, they don’t know when to give up.” (Tamaki)

“That isn’t persuasive even when said in this situation.” (Fantra)

Fantra’s ice poked Katsuragi. He completely feels as though he has already won.

“Though its fine to leave it as it is… I must reward you. I will kill this fellow in your presence. Freezing Lance.” (Fantra)

“Eh……? You’ll do what? You know he’ll revive when killed right?” (Tamaki)

“I am aware. There is also a time lag.” (Fantra)

“S-stop! Don’t kill him! It isn’t needed anymore! Don’t hurt him!” (Tamaki)

When I give that sorrowful cry, Fantra looks pleased.

“That’s good. That expression. That excites me the most. I want to see——what you look like when he is killed!” (Fantra)

Fantra aimed and drove the spear at Katsuragi’s head in the ice.

“……. Huh……?” (Fantra)

——The tip was caught and stopped.

By what? A hand.

Who’s? A certain person’s.

It was stopped by a hand that was thrust out from the ice crystal.

“H-how!? My ice, how!?” (Fantra)

Fantra retreated trembling.

It was inevitable.

Because the hand belonged to the boy who was confined until now.

The cracks extended from the broken part like a branch. The sound of the ice’s destruction acted as a countdown.

And then, it shattered completely.

“Ah…….. Ah……!” (Fantra)

Fantra looked dumbfounded, standing where he was with the spear pointing at him.

The boy who completed his revival grabbed that person’s face.

It was not possible for him to hide the blood thirst seeping from his body.

“——Yo, Fantra. I came back from hell to kill you personally.” (Daichi)

Katsuragi Daichi put on a devilish smirk, and said so.

Best Friend

“How… How!? How are you alive!?” (Fantra)

“…… This corpse, it’s noisy.” (Daichi)

He strengthened the force in his hand. You could hear the dull sound of bones breaking.

“Aaaaaah!!” (Fantra)

“I told you to be quiet!” (Daichi)

He slammed Fantra into the floor with Iron Claw.

“Gaha-…..!?” (Fantra)

Fantra became unable to breathe after the nasty blow to his chest. Even in this situation he was thinking of resisting, and you could see him trying to put his finger and thumb together so I stepped on them.

Fantra gave off a splendid scream of agony.

“Such a bad finger….. Perhaps I should separate it from you?” (Daichi)

He stomped on the fingers of Fantra’s right hand with his heel and broke them. He pulled his left thumb in the direction it doesn’t bend and it folded. A white bone from the second joint became exposed.

“Uoaua!?” (Fantra)

Again, he said something inaudible. Ending up like this was his fault.

I made out the shape of Shuri when I awoke. Tamaki collapsed. Leadred was restrained.

All three were still alive.

Fantra writhed in agony with his hand clutched near his stomach.

“Wind Cut” (Daichi)

Wind Slice was for long distances. This was meant for short distance. Since the striking range was lowered, the power increased by several steps.

The blade of wind immediately caused blood to mercilessly gush out. Blood splattered around.

“P-please… stop.” (Fantra)

He began to beg for his life. Naturally, my hand wasn’t swayed.

I will kill this guy only after I punish him.

“Earth Chain Binding” (Daichi)

Soil sprouts from the ground and binds him down in the shape of the ‘大’ kanji. This chain changed shape and grew thorns.

The thorns naturally dug into his skin when tightening.

“————Ah!?” (Fantra)

“You are someone who often shouts….. Do you not want your mouth? Incidentally, I could reduce the size of your nose as well…. How about it?” (Daichi)

“———! ———-!?” (Fantra)

“Wind Slice” (Daichi)

He becomes almost mute.

It became almost impossible for Fantra to breathe.

He began to froth at the mouth, and struggle with rage. His eyes became hollow, and then fainted.

Such a thing isn’t permitted.

“Water Ball” (Daichi)

The consciousness that he lost was forcibly returned. Cold water soaked his wounds, and Fantra began moving again.

However, moving dampened the pain.

Only pure suffering was allowed.

“Well…. Though this is insufficient….. Leadred and Shuri must be treated. Therefore, I’ll end it with the next one. Your time is over.” (Daichi)

“……” (Fantra)

Fantra was no longer able to speak. He didn’t say anything.

Red specks covered my skin. His face changed to that of someone staring death in the face.

When I was convinced that he completely lost his intention to resist, I addressed the person of merit—The Shield.

“Tamaki!” (Daichi)

“W-what? Ah, was my final performance good? I have some talent in it…..” (Tamaki)

“Ah, I’m sure you could be an actress.” (Daichi)

When I addressed her with a jest, she sent back a quizzical look.

“…… You, are you really Katsuragi? The one I know isn’t capable of smiling like that…..” (Tamaki)

“Knock it off, Shield.” (Daichi)

“Ah, it’s the usual Katsuragi.” (Tamaki)

Tamaki laughed like a child whose prank succeeded.

What should I do as retribution… No, now isn’t the time for that. I need to deal with this bastard.

However, I’ve already done this before.

“Tamaki. I must congratulate you.” (Daichi)

Tamaki was unable to respond to my unforeseen remark.

“Eh, why? Isn’t it fine if Katsuragi does it? The crystal has been used up, so it should be fine since he can’t revive anymore.” (Tamaki)

As Tamaki said, the crystals in the room that were shining lost their sparkle.

“Idiot. Wouldn’t it be good for you to use the magic crystals yourself? First, I think there is a natural crystal.” (Daichi) [TN: Not sure what is happening in this line …]

“… Ah, it was also like that huh….” (Tamaki)

Tamaki clapped her hands together with a *Pon*.

“Huh? Then, if he’s killed he’ll revive….” (Tamaki)

“You don’t have to worry. Because I’ve talked with someone.” (Daichi)

“Talked….? With who?” (Tamaki)

“A dear, dear person.” (Daichi)

Not to me, but to this guy…….

Tamaki’s head tilted to the side, but I can’t tell her. At least not while Fantra can gear it.

“Apart from that, you were the leading person today. You unexpectedly held out, Tamaki. Therefore, you kill him.” (Daichi)

“Well, if Katsuragi insists… I won’t hesitate.” (Tamaki)

Using my shoulder to help Tamaki with a『It can’t be helped』, it wasn’t bad and I smiled.

“Triple Guard” (Tamaki)

Tamaki made layers of ice in the air over Fantra, putting his life in a precarious state.

“Crush!!” (Tamaki)

Her arm was extended and she drew an arc in the air with her finger, and it began to lower.

The snow-like shield crushed his existence.

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Just as in【Rigal's Den】there was a room with a transportation magic formation, so I began explaining the strategy I came up with a little while ago when I revived.

It's not a good idea to return the long way this time, as we were already worn out. The three other than me were exhausted.

"However, I need to hear what happened. Since my consciousness faded in and out, I don't understand what went on." (Leadred)

Untying herself from the chains, Leadred cast a small fireball to warm the surroundings and her body that had grown cold. So that she wouldn't catch a cold, I passed her my robe.

"Because of my incompetence I fell… I'm sorry. I didn't understand." (Shuri)

Surrounding my neck with her arms, Shuri entrusted her weight to my back and said so apologetically. After suddenly waking up, she clung to and depended on me.

Well, as a man it is expected that I would enjoy this amazing thing right? With those touching my back… My reasoning unraveled.

After killing Fantra, I rescued these two safely. Shuri's chest was pierced through and I was carrying her on my back, though Leadred showed some modesty with difficulty and volunteered to walk.

"Not being able to die when confined in ice is common sense. And yet, the hero made use of『Revenge of the Resented』and came back…." (Leadred)

"Ah, that. I used the effects of『Deadly Poison』." (Daichi)

""Deadly Poison?"" (Leadred, Shuri)

"Yes! The special condition『Deadly Poison』." (Tamaki)

Shuri and Leadred asked in unison. I didn't answer it though, Tamaki did.

“When I was looking through Katsuragi’s pouch for various things when he was affected by Fantra’s emperor-class magic. At that time he had something. I saw the Yanu Leaf and ——.” (Tamaki)

After looking at the complexion of her close friend, Tamaki continued.

“If you ingest an excessive amount of the Yanu Leaf, you gain the special condition『Deadly Poison』. Every minute it will drain 100 stamina. In addition, if your stamina becomes zero during this effect, the person dies. In other words, it doesn’t matter if they are confined in ice.” (Tamaki)

“I see….. Though, when did he it? I didn’t see such a gesture…” (Leadred)

“When I kissed Katsuragi.” (Tamaki)

Tamaki announced it as though it was nothing.

“I tore and held the Yanu Leaf in my mouth. I pretended to kill Katsuragi so that he could eat it. Therefore—-“ (Tamaki)

Tamaki gently brushed her close friend’s hair.

“……. Katsuragi didn’t throw away Shuri-chan, so you can stop acting now you know?” (Tamaki)

Her voice was very gentle, and had the power to make Shuri cry.

Shuri didn’t expect that she was seen through and her eyes darted from place to place, flustered.

“W-was I seen through?” (Shuri)

“Obviously. You’re my best friend.” (Tamaki)

“Just now…..Truly?” (Shuri)

“It’s the truth.” (Tamaki)

“…… B-but, still.” (Shuri)

“Ah, enough! If you’re uneasy just carry on as you have been! It’s so nice that you have been whispered word of love. We annoying

insects will run away!” (Tamaki)

Trying to cheer her up, Tamaki clapped Shuri on the back.

“Riajuu explosion! Leadred-san, let’s go!” (Tamaki) [TL: English doesn’t have a word for Riajuu so… it means ‘person who is fulfilled in life’.]

Tamaki took Leadred’s hand and proceeded to run off into the transferroom.

We are left alone.

Our glances naturally cross.

There is no one near us.

What Tamaki meant by doing that, what she expected to happen when she left, I understood.

“…… Katsuragi-kun…….. Do you like me?” (Shuri)

“Of course. Shuri, I love you more than anyone.” (Daichi)

In that case, I———.

After delaying for a few minutes, we joined them at the transfer magic formation. The area is filled with light, and only the last word needs to be said now.

“… Incidentally, it seems that we weren’t able to make a new companion.” (Shuri)

The original reason we came to this dungeon was remembered and said by Shuri who had regained her energy.

“There was no other way. Besides we wouldn’t want a guy like that as a companion. It doesn’t matter though, because I was able to obtain some good information.” (Daichi)

“What information? The next dungeon?” (Shuri)

“Well, something like that. Let’s go collect two allies.” (Daichi)

“Hee. Are they… more demons?” (Shuri)

“It’ll be fun to meet them. Then….. Shall we go?” (Daichi)

I look around for confirmations. Leadred shrugs, Shuri grasps my hand, and Tamaki watches with warm expression.

Everybody gave their acknowledgement through various reactions.

“3, 2, 1—-“ (Daichi)

“”””Transfer!!””””” (Daichi, Leadred, Shuri, Tamaki)

We invoked the magic formation.

It flew up like a bright yellow sunflower and wraps around us, we were moved and hit by strong sunlight.

We returned from the【Labyrinth of the Sleeping Trance】.

Demon Goddess

After Katsuragi Daichi's group left, Fantra Angas was in the room, wrapped in silence.

He was pinned under a layer of ice, dead. However, he was the king of the undead.

He was able to revive himself using his magic. The restoration of his tattered body just completed.

Flinging away the heavy layer of ice, he began moving towards the transfer magic formation that Daichi's group used with a look of rage.

"I'll kill you……! This time I'll kill you…!" (Fantra)

Fantra was born and raised pampered. He excelled in magic ability, and there was practically no one that could match him. He was particularly skilled in ice magic, and was considered the strongest in it.

Due to that, he held a large amount of pride and thought it impossible to lose to someone with less power than himself. One by one he would destroy the minds of talented magicians that showed promise.

Because of his nature he was banished by his country at a young age, and was attacked by a large number of demons in the frontier and killed.

Messiah commanded the demon army and chose to save him.

She recognized Fantra's talent.

Fantra expressed his gratitude towards Messiah for giving him a second life, respecting her, and falling in love with her. It was unrelated that the one who killed him was her subordinate.

Dignified, with an upright back. Sophisticated mannerisms with no wasted movements. Beautiful black eyes like obsidian. Bare legs bewitchingly peeking out from her dress.

This was the impression Fantra had of Messiah.

—-Now, a girl whose appearance that was the opposite of that appeared before Fantra.

“….. Who are you, you bastard?” (Fantra)

Fantra sent the girl a suspicious glare. There was no way a young girl would make it to the underground of a dungeon like this alone.

As such he guessed that she was not an ordinary person, and made it so that he could use magic at any moment. If the sound from his finger rang out, it was his win.

Fantra had the special ability『Chant Substitution』.

It allowed him to replace the『Chanting Portion』with an『Action』to invoke the ability.

This power was given to him after being revived by the woman he fell in love with. It was proof of her love for him, and became his priceless treasure.

He used it on his opponents. He violated them with this power.

However, he was unable to use it on her.

Because he heard the girl’s voice.

“—You forgot who I am, Fantra?” (—)

Just a few words.

However, Fantra was unable mistake in that crystal clear voice. He would never forget it.

The voice of his dear, dear goddess.

He immediately kneeled on one knee, hanging his head down. Also, he began shedding tears. He was reunited with his master.

“You noticed at last.” (Messiah)

“This Fantra Angas’ actions are inexcusable! My conduct towards you was truly impolite… I shall accept any punishment!” (Fantra)

“There is no such need to humble yourself. It was because I came at my own convenience to see your face after such a long time.” (Messiah)

Fantra’s heart quivered upon hearing her words.

He wanted to raise his head so that the great goddess may see his face.

He wished to do this.

“So, will you raise your face? I wish to burn you into my memory.” (Messiah)

He relished every word and thoroughly reflected on each before letting them go.

He counted himself a very fortunate person. He didn’t care about Daichi’s group.

“That is fine with me… With pleasure.” (Fantra)

Fantra raised his head that had been lowered when as he said this.

He expected to see his dear woman’s face. However, Fantra’s vision was blocked by her hand on his face.

“Cremation Execution.” (Messiah)

One of the god-class magics that rule in this world, 『Cremation Execution』.

Eating the existence of what it burns, the fire would never extinguish. Even if you doused the flame with water or exposed it to a strong gust, as the name suggests with 『Cremation』, the hellfire would continue to burn single-mindedly until it is finished.

“Aaaaaaaah!?” (Fantra)

Not simply their body, but their entire existence would burn.

First, every memory. Next, the basis of existence, their soul. In the end it leaves an empty vessel.

In accordance with that, all of Fantra's memories began to burn from beginning to end.

Past grudges, as well as his desire for Messiah.

Before long Fantra stopped his grief-ridden shouts. He couldn't remember.

The sense of pain. Was it good when it hurt? How do you react? Even emotions began being lost.

『Why was I thrown away?』

『Why are you looking at me with those eyes?』

『Even though I am devoted to and love you, why?』

Even with that question, he was unable to ask in front of his God's absurd strength.

"Ah……. Ueh……" (Fantra)

Unable to speak any words, the concept known as Fantra Angas became dust, and vanished from this world.

"…… Deletion completed. I fulfilled my promise, Hero-sama." (Messiah)

She began to recall.

Not long ago, the boy who fought against Fantra died and came to see her.

After dying nine times with a body she had grown accustomed to, he came to the world where she exists.

However, it was premature.

He was killed as usual, though his soul was planned to be sent back, he performed an action for the first time.

He prostrated himself. [TN: Dogeza.]

『You can kill me as many times as you like, I don't care. But please kill that undead guy.』

"——Still, to ask something like that. You've already noticed who I am, haven't you…" (Messiah)

She unintentionally let out a laugh while recalling it.

"Still, I didn't make a mistake in choosing him……" (Messiah)

She placed both of her hands over her throbbing heart.

A gentle heart that contrasted with his cruel mind.

Ah…… I want to meet you again. Together we'll destroy humanity, and dawn the recovery of this world…

"This was a service, Hero-sama." (Messiah)

By erasing Fantra's existence, his ability returned to her hand so that she may grant it to the girls that supported him.

I want to help him when I can, but that annoying goddess' power won't stop getting in the way so I can only grant one ability.

Though I am concerned, I told him where to go next, where there are two people who will assist him.

That guy and girl won't imitate Fantra, so be relieved. They are some of my remaining subordinates, pure demons. Different from this deadbeat.

In her mind, she cursed the subordinate she killed.

"Besides, it seems like the girls at his side are crazy about him…" (Messiah)

If they join that child, it will only be a matter of time until all of my excellent subordinates are liberated.

I can see it, when I close my eyes I can see the gallant figure of a young man leading an army to fight against the human race.

This is the near future, it will surely become reality.

Ah……

“Quickly…… Come to me, Daichi….” (Messiah)

Speaking out such a desire, the demon goddess—Messiah vanished from this place.

Yuji-san

“…….-sama! …….-sama!” (—)

…… I could hear someone’s voice.

After being shook a few times, the fog in my head finally cleared up.

“…… Where… am I…?” (—)

Bright sunlight assaulted my eyes. Dazed, I sat up.

“Ah! Hero-sama! You woke up!” (—)

There was a man that reacted loudly. It was Rin Wade, the guard who was assigned to escort Yuji-san and the rest of us.

He looked different. From his expression, he looked to be in a hurry. I thought that he didn’t talk much during the journey because he was focused on our surroundings and grew accustomed to that but… it seems I was off.

“Yes… what’s wrong? Why are you panicking?” (Hayase)

“Ah, no… I’m fine, really.” (Rin)

Rin-san seemed to fumble over his words.

At last I regained my senses and began to look around the vicinity.

Glancing around… no one was there. Tamaki-san, Umahara-kun, as well as Minamoto-san. Even Yuji-san…

It was strange that I would be outside without everyone else. Those people aren’t so horrible that they would leave a person behind.

… I don’t know about Umahara-kun and Manamoto-san though.

I thought that because I’ve seen them bully a certain boy from the class.

At the drop of a hat, they used violence to indiscriminately bully a classmate that wasn't guilty of anything. They would give petty reasons like『I don't like him』.

To be honest, I never watched it happen. After all, from my point of view they were just trying to make themselves feel better by placing someone below them.

For the sake of confirming their dominance they abused another human, just wanting to belittle them.

In the end he was used as a decoy in the dungeon. However, I was also to blame for that.

It's not like I couldn't have done something. It was the same at school too.

At that time, if only I said something like『Stop it』. However, I was afraid that I would become the target of their bullying.

I regretted that now. If I could meet him again, even if he wouldn't understand…. I want to apologize to him. Though it may be too convenient, I felt that we all needed to do it.

"… Hero-sama? Are you unwell?" (Rin)

"Ah, no. I was just thinking a little…" (Hayase)

While I was lost in thought Rin-san's voice pulled me back to reality.

… Let's think back.

We dove into the【Labyrinth of the Sleeping Trance】.

However, Umahara-kun and Minamoto-san separated from us, and Yuji-san ran after them.

Tamaki and I were waiting on standby, when Yuji-san returned covered in scratches. Then, I fainted…

… That's right. My neck was hit hard by someone. Yuji-san wouldn't do something like that.

Then, I must have been attacked by some demon or thief that was

aiming at adventurers like us.

In other words… Yuji-san and the others are in danger!

My body moved of its own accord.

“Hero-sama! Please calm down!” (Rin)

Rin-san stopped me by holding my arms behind me.

“Please let me go! I need to hurry and help them!” (Hayase)

“With your lack of combat capabilities, even if you went in alone nothing could be done.” (Rin)

“That’s…” (Hayase)

A sensitive topic was struck and I stopped resisting. My『Grand Library』was not a special ability meant for fighting.

Though it proves its worth when supporting a companion.

My statuses aren’t that high. That’s why we came to this evil dungeon and raise our level.

“T-then, what should we do? Leave them alone?” (Hayase)

I don’t want to abandon them. I will never again do something like that.

Rin-san answered my question immediately.

“Hero-sama. I have a message from Yuji-san.” (Rin)

“From… Yuji-san?” (Hayase)

“Yes. After bringing you here after you fainted, I went back into the dungeon to help the others come out. When I did so, Hero-sama reported that he wanted you to do something.” (Rin)

“W-what is it? What did he say?” (Hayase)

“He wanted me to tell you to return to the royal palace and request aid. That only Fuuko could do this. That’s his message. Because of that we should leave at once.” (Rin)

“Let’s go! To return to the royal palace!” (Hayase)

I talked over Rin-san’s words.

Yuji-san said it. The royal palace might send backup when we return. That it was something only I can do.

Only… Fuuko…

My enthusiasm was suddenly interrupted.

My first name was used by someone I like… This feeling…

“Hero-sama? Your face is red… Are you hot?” (Rin)

“Ah, n-no! No! A-anyway, let’s leave soon! Let’s not waste any time!” (Hayase)

“Yes, certainly!” (Rin)

We got on the horse and Rin-san guided it forward.

Please wait, everyone…!

I will definitely get help!

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

After several hours, I had safely returned to the royal palace and told them what happened. Afterwords, when returning to my assigned room because I was tired, I ran into three women in the hallway.

All three were part of Minamoto-san’s group. They were, from the right, Inoma-san, Niijima-san, and Horitani-san.

Each of them had a piercing, which broke school regulations and was not good student behavior.

“Hayase. We heard, you….” (Horitani)

“W-what?” (Hayase)

“Playing dumb!? We know you ran away from Kureha’s group without helping!” (Horitani) [TN: Kureha was Minamoto’s given name]

“Eh!?” (Hayase)

I was unable to conceal my astonishment from Horitani’s words. Why, why would she think that?

“Y-you’re wrong! That isn’t what happened! There was a monster house, and I would have just been a hindrance!” (Hayase)

“Monster house!? You, why did they go somewhere that dangerous!?” (Horitani)

“We tried to stop them! B-but Minamoto-san and Umahara-kun went in anyways.” (Hayase)

“I won’t believe that Kureha would do something like that!” (Horitani)

She swept her palm down and smacked my cheek.

“Anyways, you just unreasonably tried to gain praise! Then abandoned them like we did Katsuragi!” (Horitani)

“T-that’s not it! Listen to me!” (Hayase)

“You’re annoying! Shut up!” (Horitani)

“A-!?” (Hayase)

I received a large impact to my stomach. Horitani-san’s fist stuck into me.

I crouched down, unaccustomed to the pain. Then, I was hit with a kick to the side and showered with verbal abuse.

“This murderer!” (Horitani)

“Hiii-!?” (Hayase)

I defended my head with my arms, but I couldn’t endure this unreasonable violence.

How long do I have to experience this pain? How much suffering do I need to endure?

Tears overflowed. Why did this sort of thing happen? Did I make a mistake somewhere?

“… Tch! Come on, we’re done! We’ll tell everyone about her!” (Horitani)

Satisfied that I was knocked down, the three of them walked down the hallway.

I looked outside and saw that it was nighttime. I should’ve gone to the dining room. That would’ve been normal for me, but no.

I leaned against the wall.

“Why… Why…!” (Hayase)

My tears stopped streaming. Instead, they were replaced with frustration and worthlessness.

I am powerless.

Because I am weak I am no good. Because I am weak…

“Starting tomorrow… what will I do?” (Hayase)

Horitani-san said that she would tell everyone. Then, they will label me as a『murderer』, targeting me with violence as well.

I know. Because, there was an example of this in the past. For our convenience. I will receive a similar treatment.

To be stared at like that… to be treated painfully like that…

“…… I’ll just die.” (Hayase)

My hands rose to my neck. If I shot magic here, it would be instant death.

At that moment, Yuji-san’s face came to my mind. He was the first to treat me kindly, a man that recognized my existence.

He encouraged me so much, pushing me to persevere.

“…… No.” (Hayase)

I don’t want to betray his words, and put down my hand.

“…… What should I do, Yuji-san……” (Hayase)

The hallway was empty.

Nevertheless, a voice answered the question.

『Do you want power?』

“……Eh?” (Hayase)

I look around, and see no one. However, the voice comes again.

『Sorry. I will not show you myself. I will not tell you my identity.』(—)

“Eh? Eh?” (Hayase)

『Calm down. My words are heading to you directly, using magic. So, the answer to my question?』(—)

“Ah, y-yes…” (Hayase)

『Good, obedience is good. Then, first of all, I will let you know— your Yuji-san is alive』(—)

“———!? R-really!?” (Hayase)

『Quiet down.』(—)

“Y-yes. I’m sorry.” (Hayase)

I bowed my head out of habit though there was no one.

But, that didn’t matter.

Yuji-san was alive… That filled my mind.

『Tamaki Yuina also lives. However, the other two died in an unexpected accident. As he was unable to defend them, the man who let them die will be punished.』 (—)

“T-that’s…! But, those two ignored us and went anyways!” (Hayase)

『The world is cruel. That would be taken as an excuse. And so, those two are going to the next dungeon to recruit companions. Here is my question for you.』(—)

“A question… is it?” (Hayase)

『Yes. If you become their companion, do you swear to support him?』(—)

That was a silly question. I can become his strength. Next to him I can support him.

Something like that would make me happy.

“I swear it. I will support Yuji-san through any pain.” (Hayase)

『——That’s what I expected, child.』(—)

The voice seemed to laugh in my mind.

『Then, I will give you power.』(—)

“P-power?” (Hayase)

『Yes. I will make sure later. I wish for you to help him with that power. He wants you.』(—)

“H-he wants… me…” (Hayase)

『They are heading towards a dungeon named【Scorching Execution Ground】. You will leave early tomorrow so that you won’t be found, and go there. Understand?』(—)

“Yes. Absolutely… I will go to Yuji-san…” (Hayase)

When I said so, she made a sound like a laugh and ended the conversation. The voice was not there anymore.

So then, there was only one thing I can do. The pain naturally lessened. Was it because my feelings were improved?

Though I don’t know why, Yuji-san wants me. I am wanted.

So, I will respond.

“Yuji-san…” (Hayase)

Yuji-san, Yuji-san, Yuji-san, Yuji-san, Yuji-san, Yuji-san, Yuji-san, Yuji-san, Yuji-san, Yuji-san, Yuji-san, Yuji-san, Yuji-san, Yuji-san, Yuji-san, Yuji-san, Yuji-san, Yuji-san……

My mind is dyed with his color.

I enter my room, and begin preparing to travel.

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